Twenty SERMONS

Preached upon

Several Texts,

BY

That late Reverend, Pious, and Painful Preacher, Mr *James Nalton*, Minister of St. *Leonard Foster Lane*, in the City of *London*.

And now Published for publick good by his surviving Friends.

Say unto the Righteous, it shall be well with him; Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, Isa. 3. 10.

But if you will not hear, my Soul shall weep in secret for your Pride, Jer. 13. 17.

He was a burning and a shining light, John 5. 35.

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TO THE

Right Honourable and truly Religious Lady *Mary Vere*, Baroneſs of *Tilbury*;

And to her vertuous Daughters, the Right Honourable Lady *Fairfax*, and the Honourable Lady *Wolſtenholm*.

My moſt Honoured Ladies,

May it pleaſe your Honours;

THeſe *Sermons*, *though they have not the honour of their Authors Pen, either in* tranſcribing, *or in* correcting *of them*; *yet they breath ſo much of his Spirit, that whoſoever was not a ſtranger to his Miniſtry, may eaſi-*

ly perceive whoſe labours they are, without an Interpreter: They are now come forth, by the labour and diligence of them that priz'd his Perſon, and honour'd his Miniſtry; whereunto, although I was not in a Capacity of contributing any furtherance, yet I could not in Conſcience let them paſs into the World without doing this right to the Author, Publiſhers, and to the Papers themſelves, as to give in my poor Teſtimony, That they are the genuine iſſue of him whoſe Name *they bear; whereby,* though dead, he yet ſpeaketh. *My humble Prayer to God ſhall be, That into what hand ſoever Providence may put them, the ſame Bleſſing which accompanyed the hearing of them, may go along with the reading of them alſo; for the rendring of them effectual to their ſpiritual and everlaſting good.*

As

As to my preſumption in Dedicating of them to Your Honours, I am not ignorant to how much cenſure I am liable in the Opinion of Standers-by; neither can I ſuffer more prejudice abroad, than I have ſuffered conflict in my own Spirit at home.

But the deſerved Honour I bear to the Name of my Dear Husband (now with the Lord) *and the deep ſence of my Duty to Your Honours, hath prevailed againſt all diſcouragements.*

May Your Honours be pleaſed to accept of this ſolemn acknowledgment of the various Obligations which your Ladiſhips have laid upon me, and to pardon this boldneſs, it ſhall not at all trouble me what cenſure others may paſs upon me.

The Father of Mercies *abundantly recompence all the kindness you have shewed to the* Dead *and to the* Living ; *and may the Golden Oyl of Grace, which he hath abundantly poured out upon your Heads, descend upon all the Branches of your Noble Families, and render them truly Honourable to many Generations. I cease further to trouble your Honours, and humbly beg leave to subscribe my self, in all sincerity,*

Your Honours most

Obliedged Servant

Mary Nalton.

To

To the

READER.

ALthough these Sermons (besides the common inconvenience of being Posthumous works) had the unhappiness to want the Authors own polishing (for which cause it is but justice, that if any mistake should possibly be discerned in them, it may not be laid at the Authors door) yet I am informed they were taken by the Pen of a ready Writer, and a worthy friend of the Authors, as appears. And having perused most of them, I cannot deny them this just Testimony, That I find in them the Spirit and Lineaments of that worthy Person, whose name they

bear; a Perſon, whoſe name needs no embalming, having ſo many immortal Tombs in the hearts of thoſe who were either eye or ear witneſſes of his great worthineſs, eſpecially in them, in whom he left ſuch impreſſions of true piety, as doubtleſs will abide with them for ever, and carry his bleſſed memory into the other World. And amongſt the reſt of his Excellencies, this was not the leaſt, that like precious Diamonds they were deep ſet in a profound Humility and unexampled Modeſty, whereby he ever was moſt contemptible in his own eyes, a great reſpecter of any worth in his Brethren, but a great deſpiſer and peremptory denyer of it in himſelf (the only thing wherein he might be taxed for falſe and unjuſt dealing) And that which concealed his Vertues, did moſt highly commend them, whilſt like the Sun breaking through a Cloud, it appear-

ed

ed more glorious, in ſpight of that vail which his tranſcendent humbleneſs of mind threw upon it. I might ſay much of his fervent Love and tender Compaſſion to the Souls of men, his forwardneſs to ſpend and to be ſpent for the good of his people (notwithſtanding all the frowardneſs and unkindneſs of divers of them) his indefatigableneſs in ſerving the ſpiritual neceſſities of any who made known their deſires to him, his great ingenuity and candour towards his Brethren. What the Jeſuit *ſaith of* Bellarmine *in his Life (how truly I know not, ſince* Jeſuits *allow themſelves the liberty of Equivocation) is much more true of him, that he was* Candidus erga alios, ſeverus erga ſeipſum, *He was a moſt candid Interpreter of other mens actions, but exceſſively ſevere to himſelf.*

But I muſt remember I am not now writing

writing a Panegyrick in praiſe of the Author, but a ſhort introduction to a more profitable work: And therefore I ſhall conclude the Readers trouble with this only intimation; That the Subjects here treated of are practical and profitable, the manner of handling of them plain and powerful, and ſuch as, coming ſo evidently from the heart of the Speaker, are moſt likely to make impreſſion upon the heart of the Reader; and the time (I am ſure) is not unſeaſonable, ſeeing the Reverend Author is gone to the place of ſilence, whence you will hear him no more.

The Lord who was pleaſed often to accompany his Word when it was by him preached viva voce *to the hearers, continue the powerful preſence of his Grace in the reading of it. And let ſuch as read theſe Sermons, get another Edition of them Printed*

in

in their hearts, ſo as they may be read in their lives, whereby they will anſwer the deſign and deſire of the Preacher and Publiſhers.

Thy Servant in the work
of the Miniſtry, ſo
far as he may.

MATHEVV POOLE.

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The

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Christs Provision for Mans Direction,

rection, on Isa. 40. 11. *He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather his Lambs in his Armes, and carry them in his Bosome, and shall gently lead those that are with Young.*

Mans

Mans Petition, and Gods Compaſsion.

A Sermon Preach'd *Sep. 6. 1657.*

The Text, Pſalm 138. 3.

In the day when I cryed thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthened me with ſtrength in my ſoul.

THis Pſalm for the kind of it is Euchariſtical, a thanksgiving Pſalm, the occaſion of pening this pſalm in the judgment of interpreters was this, *Davids* eſtabliſhment in the Kingdom, after that he had been hunted like a Partridge upon the Mountains, driven from his own Country, and baniſhed into a Wilderneſs, and purſued like a Traitor; when after all theſe dangers, and fears, and ſnares, and oppoſition that he met with from *Saul* and from his bloody and implacable enemies, God had now ſetled him in the Kingdome, and brought his hope into his

hand, and had lifted up his head above his adverſaries, and had troden his enemies under his feet: now what he had wone by prayer, he wears with thankfulneſs, *I will praiſe thee* (ſayes he in the foregoing verſes) *with my whole heart, I will Worſhip towards thy holy Temple, and praiſe thy name for thy loving kindneſſe and for thy truth*; for thy loving kindneſſe in promiſing, and for thy truth in performing, *for thou haſt magnified thy word above all thy name.* In the 2*d.* verſe, it is a dark ſentence at the firſt view, but as a judicious Expoſitor upon the place well obſerves, the words may be thus read, and will better agree with the Hebrew, *Thou haſt magnified thy name above all things in thy Word*, that is, in fulfilling thy word thou haſt magnified thy name above all things, in that thou haſt fulfilled thy word; what thou freely promiſedſt, thou haſt faithfully performed; what thou haſt ſpoken with thy mouth, thou haſt fulfilled with thy hand; for which thy name is wonderfully to be magnified. The name of God is that whereby God is known, thy name is wonderfully magnified in fulfilling thy word; nay, *thy name is magnified above all things*, that is the meaning of the phraſe. For the proof and evidence of this truth, that God is wonderfully to be magnified for fulfilling his promiſe, for making good his word to his Servant, for the proof of this, *David* brings in his own experience to ſet ſeal thereto in the words of the Text, for ſayes he, *In the day when I cryed to thee, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul*; ſo then in this verſe you may take notice of theſe two particulars.

Firſt you have Gods free favor and gracious dealing

dealing with *David*, in the day of his fears, and of his ſtreights, in theſe words, *In the day when I cryed thou anſweredſt me.*

Secondly, you have the evidence or proof of this free favor of God towards him, in an experience that he had of it; for ſayes he, *Thou ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul*: and accordingly there are theſe two points of doctrin that may be fairly deduced from this text.

Firſt Doct. That the Lord is ready to anſwer the Prayers of his poor ſervants when they cry unto him.

Second Doctrin, It is one gracious way of anſwering our Prayers, when God does ſtrengthen us with ſpiritual ſtrength, when he gives us ſtrength in our ſouls; the firſt of theſe.

The Lord is very ready to hear and anſwer the prayers of his poor ſervants when they cry unto him. For the proof of this point I could bring you a whole cloud of witneſſes out of the books of God, but I will content my ſelfe with three or four. That in the 107 *Pſalm, Then they cryed unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes*: and it is four times repeated in that one pſalm, for the confirmation of our faith, becauſe we are ſo backward to believe the truth of it, & he gives four inſtances of men that were brought into great ſtreights, and ſtill when they cryed unto the Lord, the Lord delivered them out of their diſtreſſes: and remarkable is that Scripture, 30 *Iſaiah* 19 *For the people ſhal dwel in* Zion, *at* Jeruſalem *thou ſhalt weep no more, he will be very gracious unto thee at the voyce of thy cry, when he ſhal hear it he ſhal anſwer thee*: Mark, he will be very gracious to thee at the voyce of thy cry.

you shall see the experience of it in two of Gods Saints and Servants, that had tasted of Gods goodness in this particular, and have set it down for our incouragement, one was the prophet *Jeremiah* in the Dungeon, 3 *Lamentation* 55, 56. *I called upon thy name O Lord out of the low Dungeon, thou hast heard my voice, hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry:* God had an ear for his very breathing. The other example is that of the prophet *Jonah*, in the Whales belly, in that remarkable place, 2 *Jonah* 2. *Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fishes belly, and said, I cryed by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord and he heard me: out of the belly of hell cryed I and thou hearedst my voice.* If you would know a reason why God is thus ready to hear and answer the prayers of his Servants when they cry, take these three or four reasons briefly.

First, Because of Gods faithfulnesse, he is very faithful that hath promised, *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear and answer, and thou shalt glorifie me*, 50 *Psalm* 15. so in the 65 *Isaiah* 24. *And it shal come to passe, that before they call I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking I will hear*; God is faithfull to his promises, *All his promises in Jesus Christ are yea, and in him they are amen.* Our unfaithfulnesse cannot make him unfaithfull, if we believe not, he remains faithfull, he cannot deny himself.

Secondly, God hears his Servants prayers, because of that compassion that is in him towards them; as he is very faithfull, so he is very pityfull; as he hath beams of Majesty, so hath he also bowels of mercy; and his bowels yearn towards his poor children

children when they cry to him, *Can a mother forget her ſucking childe, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb, yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee*, 49 *Iſaiah* 15. A tender hearted mother if ſhe hear her little child whimper in the cradle, that does not move her; but if the childe cry to purpoſe then her bowels yearn towards it, ſhe can ſtay no longer from it, but runs in all haſt to it; ſo here when we doe but whimper, pray coldly, God may be is not ready to hear; but if we cry in prayer, if we follow God with our ſupplications, then his bowells cannot but earn towards us.

Third reaſon, Becauſe Gods ſervants have Jeſus Chriſt to pray for them, *We have an advocate with the Father Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, he is pleading our cauſe, 1 *Epiſt. John* 2, 1. and *he ever lives to make interceſſion for us*, 7 *Hebr.* 25. Nay his very preſence with the Father, is our interceſſion, he appears in the preſence of God for us, he appears as our advocate in our ſtead, for our good 9 *Hebr.* 24. *For Chriſt is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven it ſelfe, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.*

The fourth reaſon is this, Becauſe the ſervants of God have not only Chriſt to pray for them, but they have the Spirit of Chriſt to pray in them, 8 *Rom.* 26. *Likewiſe the ſpirit alſo helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the ſpirit it ſelfe maketh interceſſion for us, with groans which cannot be uttered.* If you ask me but how does the ſpirit of God help our infirmities, I anſwer theſe four or five wayes.

First, The spirit of God helps our infirmities, by affecting us with them, with our wants and weaknesses, that being humbled and lying low at the feet of God, we may be vessells more capable of mercy. God will not pour in the oyl of his mercy, but into the vessels of a broken heart; now the spirit of God by a sight and sense of our manifold infirmities, doth empty us and works in us some kind of brokennesse of heart, and so fits us for mercy.

Secondly, Again the spirit of God helps our infirmities likewise, by acting his own graces in us, by acting those beginnings of faith, and love, and humility, and self-denial, which he himself hath wrought in us.

Thirdly, By stiring up in us holy motions, holy desires, and pantings, and breathings after our heavenly Father, even such breathings as these, 42 *Psal.* 1, 2. *As the heart panteth after the water brooks; so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God,* when wilt thou come to me, when shall I come to thee, And *my soul followeth hard after God.*

Fourthly, The spirit of God helps our infirmities, by working in us a childlike boldnesse, enabling us to cry abba Father: we can come to God as a childe to a Father, Father I want this, I want that, God is delighted to hear the moan-makings of his poor children.

Fifthly, By restraining Sathan, that he may not interrupt us and distract us in holy services; for this is certain, we seldome goe to duty but Sathan still stands at our right hand: when *Joshua the high Priest*

Prieſt ſtood before the Angel of the Lord, Satan ſtood at his right hand to reſiſt him, 3 *Zach.* 2. But now, Jeſus Chriſt he is ſtronger than Sathan, and he by his ſpirit does rebuke him. But there is one great objection I know will be ready to ariſe in every one of your hearts, you ſay God is ready to hear and anſwer the prayers of his poor ſervants, when they cry to him; but ſome will ſay, experience ſeems to deny this, Gods own ſervants pray oft and yet they have no anſwer; nay God is ſometimes angry with the prayers of his ſervants, *Pſalm* 80.4. *O Lord God of hoſts how long wilt thou be angry againſt the prayer of thy people*, the prophet *Jeremiah* he profeſſes he cryed to God and ſhouted, and yet God ſhut out his prayers and wrapt himſelf in a cloud, that his prayers ſhould not paſs through, 3 *Lam.* 44. *Thou haſt covered thy ſelfe with a cloud that our prayers ſhould not paſs through.* It may be ſome will ſay, I have been praying for ſuch a grace twenty, thirty, yeers together, and yet have not got it; for ſtrength againſt ſuch a corruption, and yet have not got it. For anſwer to this objection you muſt know.

Firſt, Gods people ſometimes pray not when they ſeem to pray.

Secondly, God hears his people, when ſometimes he ſeems not to hear.

Firſt, Gods people pray not when they ſeem to pray, as when they pray coldly and careleſly this is as no prayer; as the Apoſtle ſaid in the like caſe, *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lords Supper*, 1 *Corinth.* 11, 20. as if he ſhould ſay, irregular, unprepared receiving is not receiving at all, as good never a whit

as never the better; ſo here cold careleſſe formall cuſtomary prayer, is as no prayer, 9 *Dan.* 13. *All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and underſtand thy truth,* for theſe ſeventy yeers hath thine hand been heavy upon us, yet we have not made our prayers before the Lord our God; we made a ſhew of praying, but our careleſſe praying may be ſaid to be no praying.

Again, Gods people in praying may be ſaid not to pray at all, when they exerciſe only gifts in prayer, and have not the grace of prayer; for you muſt know, the power and prevalency of prayer doth not conſiſt in the neatneſſe of the phraſe, nor in the redundancy of rhetorick, nor in curious oratory; it conſiſts not in outward expreſſions; but it conſiſts in the humility of a ſpirit wounded, and looking up to God; it conſiſts in this, God looks at this, the frame of the ſpirit, not at the outward expreſſions in prayer: a man may by the ſtrength of parts have an excellent gift in prayer, and yet not the grace thereof: If you ask me how may a man know the difference between the gift of prayer and the grace of prayer, I anſwer (briefly) you may know it by theſe particulars.

Firſt, The gift of prayer vents it ſelf in publick more than in private; but now the grace of prayer vents it ſelfe more in private than in publick, it will enable a man in his private cloſet, to pour out his ſoul before God, when there is no witneſſe but his heavenly Father and his own conſcience.

Secondly, You ſhall obſerve the gift of prayer puffs a man up with pride; but now the grace of prayer

prayer makes a man very lowly & baſe in his own eyes; the more grace a man hath in his heart, the more baſe he will be in his own account, even in his greateſt enlargements.

Thirdly, The gift of prayer makes a man pray in the ſtrength of his parts; but now the grace of prayer makes a man pray in the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt.

Fourthly, The gift of prayer expects an eccho of commendation from men; but now the grace of prayer that expects only an approbation from God.

Fifthly, The gift of prayer vents it ſelfe in outward expreſſions; but the grace of prayer conſiſts in the inward impreſſions upon the heart, not the outward expreſſions of the mouth.

Sixtly, The gift of prayer will quiet the heart for the preſent, but it doth not purifie the heart; it will quiet the heart, it will ſtop the mouth of a chiding conſcience, which otherwiſe would be rateing at us: if a man neglect prayer as a gift, his conſcience will be unquiet; but now the grace of prayer will not only quiet, but purifie the conſcience.

The ſecond part of the anſwer to the objection is this, the objection was this, experience ſeems to deny this truth, that God is ready to hear and anſwer the prayers of his people: I have a ſecond anſwer, and that is this, God may be ſaid to hear and anſwer the prayers of his people when he ſeems not to hear, as we may ſeem to pray when we doe not pray; ſo God may be ſaid to hear when he ſeems not to hear, for example.

Firſt, God ſeems not to hear when he hears, when he puts our prayers into his book, and our

tears

tears into his bottle; when he hath a book of remembrance for our prayers, when our prayers are upon the file, though for the preſent we doe not ſee them anſwered, 10 *Acts* 4. God ſpeaks to *Cornelius* there, *Thy prayers and alms are come up for a memoriall before me*: *Cornelius* was ready to think, I have prayed thus long, I have loſt all my labour, I ſee no fruit, no benefit of them; but ſaith God to him, thy prayers are in remembrance, they are upon the file for all that.

Secondly, God hears when he ſeems not to hear, namely when he is fitting us for the mercy he intends to beſtow upon us, God makes his people wait for a mercy as appears out of thoſe words, *Iſaiah* 8. 17. *I will will wait upon the Lord that hideth away his face from the houſe of* Jacob, *and will look up*: And God ſayes that he will wait that he may be gracious, 30 *Iſaiah* 18. God waits opportunities to beſtow mercy when they are moſt ſeaſonable, when his people are fitted for mercy. A man that is about to pour in ſome precious oyl into a glaſſe, if he ſee ſome dirt at the bottome of the glaſſe, he ſtops his hand for the preſent, ſayes he, let the glaſſe be waſht firſt, then I will pour in the oyl; ſo if our hearts be once waſht and fit to receive the mercy we beg, then God will beſtow it, 4 *Jeremy* 14. *Oh* Jeruſalem *waſh thy heart from wickedneſſe, that thou mayeſt be ſaved*: when we waſh away our ſins by repentance, and are fit for mercy, then God beſtows it on us, in the mean time he hears though he ſeems not to hear.

Thirdly, God hears when he ſeems not to hear, when he hears according to our wants though not according to our wills, when he beſtows upon us

that

that which is better than what we pray for, 34 *Pſalm* 10. *The greedy Lyons ſhall lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that ſeek the Lord ſhal not want any good thing* : if it be good for them they ſhall not want it, if peace and plenty, and proſperity were good for them they ſhall not want it, but God would beſtow it upon them ; but if they would abuſe their peace, and plenty, and proſperity to pride and preſumption, then the denial of them would be a great mercy : God ſometimes denies that in mercy to his children, which he grants in anger to wicked and ungodly men, it is better a thouſand times to be under the frowns of Gods favour, than under the ſmiles of his vengeance ; it is better to weep with Chriſt, than ſport with Satan ; its better to be a corrected child, than a cockered baſtard ; *If we want chaſtiſement whereof all are partakers, then are we baſtards and not Sons*, 12 *Hebr.* 8. its better to be chaſtiſed of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world, than ſpared with the world and condemned to all eternity. A man at the firſt view would wonder at Gods dealing with *Paul*, and his dealing with Satan ; Satan begged that he might have liberty to tempt *Job*, God anſwered Satan & gives him leave, *Job* 1. *goe thy way and tempt him*. *Paul* on the other ſide, he earneſtly begged to be free from the buffetings of Satan, he begged thrice that God would remove the thorn in the fleſh, and this was all the anſwer he could have for the preſent, 2 *Corint.* 12 *My grace is ſufficient for thee* : Why may ſome ſay, doth God anſwer Satan in his requeſt about *Jobs* ſufferings, and not *Paul* in his requeſt about the Divels buffeting him ? why was God more ready

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to gratifie Satan in his request, than *Paul* in his, who was a chosen vessel; a man would wonder at this; but if you observe it well, *Paul* was heard in that he was not heard, and the Divel was not heard in that he was heard.

First, *Paul* was heard in that he was not heard, for he was heard to his advantage; though he was not heard in the letter of his request: he beg'd that the thorn in the flesh might be removed, Gods answer was, *My grace is sufficient for thee*: God in giving him supporting grace under the temptation gave a fitter mercy for *Paul* than the removal of the temptation; because God saw that *Paul* by reason of the multitude of his Revelations had need to be kept humble; therefore my supporting grace is better for thee than the deliverance thou beggest. *Paul* was heard in that he was not heard, though he was not heard in the letter of his request, yet he was heard for the better, for his advantage.

On the contrary, The Divel was not heard in that he was heard, he beg'd liberty to tempt *Job*, God gave him leave, *Job* 1. *Lo he is in thy hand, all he hath is in thy power*; but what did the Divel get by it, he was baffled, and foold, and prov'd a lyer to his face; for *Job* notwithstanding all the losses upon his estate kept his integrity and sinned not; but saith the Divel, *Put forth thine hand and touch his bone & his flesh, and he wil curse thee to thy face: and the Lord said, lo he is in thy hand, but save his life*: then the Divel used all his art he could to make him blasphem God, but he could not prevail; so the Divel was proved a lyer to his face.

Now the use I shall make is this, This doctrine

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may be like *Aaron* and *Hur* to hold up *Moſes* hands, it is a great encouragement to every one of us to pray ſtill, to ſeek the face of God ſtill, though he ſeems to delay us, or deny our importunities, or to turn from us, yet follow God ſtill, though he ſeem to deny our prayers, yet give not over praying, for you ſee God will at one time or other, in one kinde or other anſwer all the prayers that are put up to him, *In the day when I cryed thou anſweredſt me.* Let me tell you, we ſhall never have cauſe to repent of our praying, could we pray an hundred times more than we doe, we ſhould never have cauſe to repent of our praying, except it be for this, that we have prayed no more frequently and fervently. And ſo much for the firſt point of doctrin.

The ſecond point of doctrin is this, It is one gracious way of anſwering our prayers, when God doth beſtow upon us ſome ſpiritual ſtrengths, when he beſtowes ſtrength in our ſouls, that is one way of Gods anſwering our prayers graciouſly; if he do not give the thing we deſire, yet if he gives us ſtrength in our ſouls, he graciouſly anſwers our prayers. For the better clearing of this point it may be demanded, what is this ſpiritual ſtrength, I anſwer, it is a work of the ſpirit of God, enabling a man to doe and ſuffer what God would have him, without fainting or backſliding.

I call it a work of the ſpirit of God, becauſe indeed it is the ſpirit of God, that does corroborate and ſtrengthen the ſoul, 3 *Eph.* 16. *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthned with might by his ſpirit in the inner man.* Alas we of our ſelves, if we have not the ſpirit of God

God to help us, are as weak as water; we are no more able to stand in a day of trial, or withstand any temptation, than a little childe is able to withstand a giant; but now when *Sampson* was cloathed with the spirit, then he could grapple with a Lyon; so when once we are cloathed with the spirit of God, we shall be able to encounter with lyon like corruptions and temptations.

Secondly, whereby a man is able to doe and suffer, what God would have him to doe and suffer, there is strength, considerable strength required in doing the will of God, 1 *Joshua* 7. *Only be thou strong and very couragious, that thou mayest observe to doe according to all the Law, which* Moses *my servant commanded thee, turn not from it to the right hand, or the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest*; but there is a great deal more strength repuired in suffering. *Paul* had attained a great deal of strength, when he said, *For the Lord Christ his sake I have suffered the losse of all things*, 3 *Phil.* 8.

Thirdly, I say whereby a man is enabled to do and suffer what God requires without fainting, and backsliding; there is strength required in doing the will of God, but there is much strength required in suffering, I but yet much more strength is required in perseverance; for if we faint in the day of adversity our strength is but smal, 24 *Pro.* 10. and therefore sayes the Apostle, we must often *Look upon Jesus Christ the authour and finisher of our faith, and consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds*, 12 *Heb.* 3.

Secondly, It may be demanded, how doth God strengthen

ſtrengthen a man with ſtrength in his ſoul, I anſwer theſe three wayes.

Firſt, God ſtrengthens a Chriſtian with ſpirituall ſtrengths, when he doth comfort him in the aſſurance of his love, ſhed abroad in his heart by the holy Ghoſt; oh this will enable a man to bear any burthen! Smite Lord (wil ſuch a one ſay) I wil bear any thing willingly, becauſe my ſins are forgiven.

Secondly, God ſtrengthens us with ſtrength in our ſouls, by incouraging us in our ſufferings, by cheering up our hearts with ſome inward cordial. Look how God cheer'd up Saint *Paul* when he was in danger, when fourty men ſwore his death, in the 23 *Acts* 11. *And the night following the Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, be of good cheer* Paul, *for as thou haſt teſtified for me in* Hieruſalem, *ſo muſt thou bear witneſſe alſo at* Rome. So when God comes and cheers up the heart, and brings ſome of his beſt cordials in our worſt fainting fits, when in our ſtrongeſt afflictions he brings in his ſweeteſt conſolations, when we are able to ſay with *David*, 94 *Pſal.* 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my ſoul:* when God brings in his divine comforts, then he ſtrengthens us with ſtrength in our ſouls. As I remember when *Phillip Landſgrave* being long priſoner under *Charles* the fift, being demanded what cheered him up in that condition, made this anſwer, I feel ſayes he the divine comforts of the Martyrs; God hath divine comforts for his people in their fainting fits, as their afflictions abound; ſo he makes his comforts to abound.

Thirdly, God ſtrengthens with ſtrength in the ſoul, when he does ſupport and keep up the ſpirit from

from sinking, sayes *David* in the 94 *Psalm* 17, 18. *Unlesse the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in silence, but when I said my foot sliped thy mercy O Lord held me up*; that is an excellent Scripture, 41 *Isaiah* 10. *Fear thou not for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, with the right hand of my righteousnesse*; And observe, when God does support a man, though the affliction be never so heavy, yet it shall not sink him, but he shall be able to stand under it, see it in *David*, 1 *Sam.* 30. 4. when he was at *Ziglag*, when there was such a load of afflictions upon him, *he wept that he could weep no longer*, his own souldiers mutinied, his wives taken and carried captive, yet God supported him in that great distresse. On the contrary, under lesse temptations and troubles, if God doe not support a man, he will fal, see the contrary in *Ahitophell*; becaus his councel was not accepted, God not supporting him under this light trouble, he goes and hangs himself.

For the use of this, if this be one way of Gods hearing our prayers, when he strengthens us with strength in our souls, then call your selves to an accompt, whether God hath strengthned your souls yea or no: here is divers of you that have been made partakers of a strengthening ordinance this day, namely the Lords supper, which the Lord Jesus hath appointed; for your spiritual confirmation & corroboration. Now will it not neerly concern you to ask your own souls this question? hath God strengthened you with strength in your souls? It may be you will say to me, how shall we doe to know it? Answer me but these four or five questions, and you may know it. First

First tell me, what are you in the time of troubles and temptations? for what a man is in tryals that is the man; can you live in a time of straits, fears, doubts and dangers? as the strength of a ship is tryed in the time of a storm, if she can live in a storm, then you may say she is a strong ship; the strength of a Castle is tryed in the time of battel, if it can endure the roaring Cannon, then its a strong Castle; now if you can keep your standing in a time of danger, this argues you have received spiritual strength in your souls.

Secondly, Can you bear variety of conditions without fainting? can you passe through good report and ill report, through honour and dishonour, through a prosperous estate and decayed estate? can you passe through these with an equall temper and frame of spirit; as you are not puft up with prosperity, so you are not too much cast down with adversity. Saint *Paul* had this strength, *I have learnt*, saith he, *in what estate soever I am therewith to be content.*

Thirdly, Can you cleave close to Jesus Christ without wearinesse constantly? if you be off and on, if your way be uneven its a token you have little strength.

Fourthly, Are you able to doe duties in a spiritual manner: the spiritual performance of holy duties, argues the receiving of some spiritual strength, by these and the like questions you may know whether you have received some of this spiritual strength yea or not.

A second use I shal make, it is by way of exhortation: oh labour to read this text experimentally, read it I say, so as your own hearts may make a

commentary on it, *Oh Lord, thou haſt anſwered me; Lord, I can ſpeak by experience, I was as weak as water, but thou haſt ſtrengthened me with ſtrength in my ſoul. What ever was written afore time, was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope.* This inſtance of *David*, was written for your imitation and conſolation: O labor for this ſpiritual ſtrength. To preſſe you to attain it, I ſhall uſe but this one motive.

Conſider the great need you have of this ſpiritual ſtrength at all times, but eſpecially in times of generall fears and dangers, then you have ſpecial need of it: In what regard, may be you will ſay, doe we need ſo much ſtrength in our ſouls? I will tell you, in theſe four reſpects eſpecially or on this fourfold account.

Firſt, In regard of duties that are to be performed.

Secondly, In regard of afflictions that are to be endured.

Thirdly, In regard of the enemies that are to be encountered.

Fourthly, In regard of the danger of apoſtacy that is to be prevented.

First, You have great need of this ſpiritual ſtrength in regard of the duties that are to be performed: Oh a Chriſtian hath much work lying upon his hands in reference to eternity; a great work it is to provide oyl in your Lamps, grace in your hearts; a great work it is to get the hazzard of eternity over, to get an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, and to get an aſſurance of that intereſt; a great work it is for you to *make your calling and election ſure*,

ſure

sure to your own souls, to be *working out your salvation with fear and trembling*; a great work it is for you to be *pondering the paths of your feet, to keep your hearts above all keepings, to be building up your selves in your most holy faith*; these are very great works: It is the language of the Apostle S. *Jude*, 20. *verse* of his *Epistle*, *But ye Beloved, building up your selves in your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost*; and to be *pressing forward towards the mark, for the price of the most high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil.* 3.4. Nay, a Christian hath yet a harder work then this to do, for a Christian is to do that work that crosses his own carnal and corrupt will. There are some difficult dutyes of Christianity that are to be performed, as *the denying of our selves*, a hard duty; the crossing of our carnal and corrupt Affections, a hard duty; the mortifying of a beloved Lust, a very hard duty; the plucking out of a right eye, the cutting off of a right hand, a parting with sin that is as dear as our right hand and our right eye, a difficult duty; so for a man to be crucifying the flesh with the Affections and Lusts thereof; to be contemning the world, to trample upon the pleasures, the flatteryes, the blandishments of it; for a man to love his enemies, to pray for them that persecute him, to do good to them that despitefully use him; How is it possible for a man to do all this work; a difficult work; this work which so much crosses his own carnal and corrupt frame, if he have not a considerable portion of spiritual strength a weak Christian, alas, is offended with every thing, he is ready to stumble at every straw, every duty is a burthen to him, every command of

Christ seems grievous to him, every yoak of Christ he is not able to take upon his neck: it may be he may have some flashes of good desires now and then, as *Baalam* had, *oh that I might dye the death of the righteous*; It may be he may have some good purposes and resolutions, as *Saul* had, 1 Sam. 26. 21. *Return my Son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day*; But all his purposes came to nothing. Nay, may be sometimes he may have some endeavours, faint feeble endeavours, in the way of grace, just like the third ground in the Paruble, which wanted root, it brought forth indeed a blade, but it brought forth (the Text says) nothing to perfection. If a man be a weak Christian, alas, it is very little that he can do in the business of Eternity, you have great need of strength therefore in this regard.

Secondly, you have great need of strength, in regard of the Afflictions Temptations, Troubles, and Tryals that are to be endured. You have often heard, and you will know it at one time or other; you will not believe us, but you will believe one day your own experience, *that through many Afflictions you must enter into the kingdom of God.* And 2 Tim. 3. 12. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* They must look for persecution in one kind or other: *And in the world you shall have tribulation, saith our Saviour*; you must look for it, says he, if you be my disciples, *Joh.* 16. 33. And says *Luther*, if thou beest not a cross-bearing-Christian, thou art no Christian indeed: How is it possible now for a man to climb this rocky way, if he hath not strength,

strength; for the way to heaven is like the way that *Jonathan* and his Armour-bearer had, in climbing up a great rock; *a sharp rock was on the one side, and a sharp rock was on the other side*, 1 Sam. 14. 4. How is it possible for a man to climb up this rocky way, if he have not some considerable strength. If *Stephen*, for example, had not had a great measure of strength, how could he have lookt upon his persecutors so chearfully in the midst of all their threatnings, when they were ready to stone him; yet then *they beheld his face, as if it had been the face of an Angel*, Acts 6. 15. And if St. *Paul* had not had considerable strength, how could he have sayd, *True, the holy Ghost witnesseth that bonds and afflictions wait for me in every place, in every City where ever I go; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testifie the Gospel of the grace of God*, Acts. 20. 23, 24. What a gallant answer was that which one made to *Valentinian* the *Arrian Emperour*, that threatned him with Bonds, Imprisonment, Banishment, and Death? tush, says he, let him scare children with such Bugg-bears as these, he cannot scare me with them; he may take away my life, but he cannot take away my love to the truth; here was a strong Christian. Now I say, if a man have not a considerable strength, how can he be able to bear all the afflictions that he may meet with? *Can you drink of the cup* (says our Saviour) *that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptisme that I am baptized with?* Mat. 20. 22. He speaks there of the baptisme of blood,

can you be baptized with this bloudy baptisme, can you be content to suffer for my sake?

Thirdly, you have need of a great deal of strength in your souls, in regard of the enemyes that are to be encountred with; spiritual enemyes, dangerous enemyes, deadly implacable enemyes. For example now: One of the greatest enemyes you have to encounter with, is an invisible enemy, namely, that *Judas* which you and I have in our Hearts, the cursed corruption in our Natures, that works us more mischief then either the World or the Devil, nay, all the devils in Hell can do. You see the whole world in a manner is subdued by this cursed enemy called sin, the whole world almost is brought into bondage to it, and it is an enemy that you and I can never be rid of, until our bodyes drop down into the dust.

Then you have a flattering & bewitching world, and the lusts and pleasures of it are its baits: those baits and allurements of it, do so Lyme-twigg the soul, it is not able to mount up; oh, how many are bewitched by it to their own destruction. *Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world*, and he loves it because it is present. What is the reason of all the Apostacy, and Backsliding, and falling from the Profession, and Principles, and practise of Godliness, but only the love of this present world: Men love the world because it is present, they prefer a present possession, before a future expectation: Christs promise is for the future, you shall be happy hereafter, but say they, the world pays down upon the nail; you shall have it in hand, not in hope, says the world; if you can but lye, swear, and cog, and flatter, and temporize,

porize, and turn with every wind, ſaith the world, you ſhall have this preferment. Now this is that that takes with many men; the World is ſuch an enemy, while it kiſſes it kills; the World like *Dalilah*, while it dandles you upon its lap, it betrays you to Satan. How many are there at this day, that will ſacrifice the peace of a good conſcience? they will forſake, and looſe God and Chriſt, and heaven, and happineſs, and all, rather then they will part with their preſent enjoyments; oh, that ſuch would conſider the pleaſures of ſin are but for a ſeaſon, but the puniſhments for ſin are for ever.

Again, you have Satan to encounter with, who is an implacable enemy, a roaring Lyon, that walks about ſeeking whom he may devour; and the dint of all his malice, is againſt thoſe that deſire to walk moſt ſtrictly, moſt uprightly before God: for the greater part of the world, I mean them that are regenerate, thoſe that are rockt aſleep in the Cradle of ſecurity, he never troubles them. When the ſtrong man armed keeps his Pallace, all his Goods are in peace, *Satan* never moleſts them, theſe are his own houſhold, under his own power; but the dint of all his malice is againſt thoſe that have given up their names to Jeſus Chriſt; and the more holy and heavenly minded, and unblameable you deſire to be, in your Converſations the greater will be his rage and enmity againſt you.

Fourthly, another enemy you have to encounter with, and that is death, the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed, which is called the King of fears, and the fear of Kings, of all terribles the moſt ter-

rible, as the Philosopher calls it; Now, you have all these enemyes to conquer, and how can you look the King of terrors in the face, if you have not this spiritual strength.

Fourthly, you have need of a great deal of strength, in regard of the danger of Apostacy, that must be prevented: Oh great, exceeding great, greater then I am able to tell you is the danger of Apostacy! oh, that I could speak it with all earnestness, that if it might be, you might take heed of it; *Those that turn aside to their crooked wayes, the Lord shall lead them forth with the works of iniquity.* Oh, they are lost and undone for ever! Psal. 125.5. *And if any man draws back* (saith God) *my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* A dreadful Scripture, which may make Apostates quake and tremble. God takes no pleasure in such as draw back; *and it had been better for a man never to have known the ways of God, then having known them, to turn aside from the holy Commandement.* Its better to be an *Atheist*, a *Pagan*, a *Turk*, an *Infidel*, any thing rather then an *Apostate*; And they that shall put their hands to the Plow, and look back, are not fit for the Kingdom of God. Oh great is the danger of Apostacy, but now without some considerable strength, you will not be kept from failing, and those failings will turn to fallings, and those fallings to fallings away, and at last falling into everlasting destruction. Now these fallings, and fallings away, do usually follow this want of spiritual strength, not being strengthned with strength in our souls.

But may be, you will say to me, what course must we take, that we may get this spiritual strength,

ſtrength, in our ſouls? I anſwer briefly, make uſe of theſe rules and helps.

Firſt, be very ſenſible of your weakneſs and infirmity, be humble, be baſe in your own eyes, be nothing in your ſelves, that you may be able to ſay, *In Jeſus Chriſt have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* Iſai. 45. 24. It was a ſweet Meditation of St. *Auguſtin*, *Lord, I will be weak in my ſelf, that I may be ſtrong in thee*; and the Apoſtle hath ſuch a phraſe, *For when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* 2 Cor. 12. 10. that is, when I am moſt weak in my ſelf, then am I moſt ſtrong in a Saviour.

Secondly, if you would have this ſtrength in your ſouls, be acting the Grace which you have received already, for action increaſeth ſtrength, and ſtrength will help action forwards; the more you are doing duty, the more will you gather ſtrength to do duty. It was the *Motto* of an eminent Divine in this Nation now with God, *The way to Holineſs, lyes in the works of Holineſs*; ſo the way to get ſpiritual ſtrength, lyes in doing the work you have to do, with that ſtrength you have: uſe ſtrength and you ſhall have more ſtrength.

Thirdly, if you would have ſtrength in your ſouls, grow eſpecially in Corroborating, and ſtrengthning Graces. What are thoſe ſtrengthning Graces? 1. *Faith*, that is a very ſtrengthning grace, you read of the ſtrength of Faith: *Abraham* was ſtrong in faith, and that made him do great things, that he could againſt hope, believe in hope; that is, againſt hope of ſenſe, believe in hope of a promiſe. *Rom.* 4. 18. ſo be ſtrong in Love, Love to Jeſus Chriſt: Love is a very

very ſtrengthning Grace, *Love is ſtrong as death*, Cant. 8. 6, 7. Death you know, is ſo ſtrong, that it hath conquered all men that ever were in the world; never was there any Gyant ſo ſtrong, but could be conquered by death; there is no diſcharge in that warre: the meaning is this, never any man encountred with death that came off, but Love is ſtronger then Death; If thy Heart be fired with Love to Jeſus Chriſt, it will carry you with a great deal of ſtrength through all difficultyes, and ſufferings, with patience, and perſeverance. 3. Again, get more ſincerity; *Job* 17. 9. *The righteous alſo ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger*: Oh, the more ſincere you are, the more ſtrong you are. For example: Wherein conſiſts the ſtrength of a Pillar? it is in the uprightneſs of it, if it begins to bow, and bend, and be crooked, then it falls; but the uprightneſs of it is the ſtrength of it. 4. Joy, Joy, that is another ſtrengthning Grace, *Nehe.* 8. 10. *Neither be ye ſorry, for the joy of the Lord ſhall be your ſtrength.* Oh, the more inward joy in the Holy Ghoſt you have, the more cheerful you are, the more ſtrong you are: grow in theſe ſtrengthning Graces.

Fourthly, would you have this ſtrength in your ſouls, then take heed of ruſhing into any known ſin; for ſin, as it wounds the conſcience, it weakens the ſoul alſo; ſins againſt conſcience, are like a thief in the Candle, which weakens our ſtrength, and waſts our joy. Nothing weakned *Sampſon* ſo much, as his ſporting with his *Dalilah*; Never had he loſt his ſtrength, had it not been for his running into that ſin, take heed therefore of ſins againſt conſcience.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, if you would have ſtrength in your ſouls, take heed of evil company, ſhun them as a Peſt-houſe; for many times evil company weakens the ſoul more then any outward temptation. *Pſal.* 119. 115. *Depart from me ye wicked, for I will keep the Commandements of my God.* It is, as if he ſhould ſay, he could never ſet about the work of Obedience, ſo long as he kept company with the wicked.

Sixthly, If you would have ſtrength in your ſouls, then get more intimate and boſom Communion with Jeſus Chriſt every day; for the truth is, all our ſtrength is from him; *I am able to do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheth me*; Phil. 4. 13. the more you are acquainted with Chriſt, the more will you have of this ſtrength, which *David* here in the Text ſpeaks of.

Laſtly, if you would have this ſtrength, be much in prayer, that is an excellent Scripture, *Pſal.* 119. 28. *My ſoul melteth away for heavineſs, ſtrengthen thou me according to thy Word.* Oh, the more we are in Prayer, and Care, and Watchfulneſs, and Humility, and ſelf-Denial, and in the exerciſe of Grace; the more we ſhall find our ſpiritual ſtrength increaſed; that we ſhall experimentally ſay with *David*, *thou haſt ſtrengthned me with ſtrength in my ſoul.*

Light

Light Diſcovered, and Man Recovered.

A SERMON preach'd *Aug.* 17. 1656.

Text, 2-Tim. 1. 10. *the later part of the verſe.*

And hath brought life and immortality to light through the Goſpel.

THE Apoſtle in the beginning of this Chapter, exhorting *Timothy* to a faithfull diſcharge of his Miniſterial Calling, puts in this weighty caution, in the 8. verſe, *Be not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord, nor of me his priſoner; but be thou partakers of the afflictions of the Goſpel, according to the power of God*; that is, be not aſhamed of the Goſpel; that he calls there the Teſtimony of our Lord Jeſus: though it may be thou maiſt meet with afflictions, and oppoſitions in the profeſſion of it, yet ſeeing theſe afflictions are but ſufferings for the Goſpels ſake, therefore bare them patiently; it is better that thou ſhouldeſt ſuffer, then that the Goſpel ſhould ſuffer. This Caution, or Exhortation, the Apoſtle preſſes from an Argument, drawn from the unſpeakable benefit and advantage

vantage that comes ſtreaming to us by the Goſpel, namely eternal life; and that the Apoſtle might be rightly underſtood, he lays down the three cauſes of this Eternal life, or Salvation.

Firſt, the principal or moving cauſe of this Salvation, that is, the grace of God, in the foregoing verſe, the 9. verſe, *Who hath ſaved us, and called us, with a holy calling; not according to our works; but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began.*

Secondly, he lays down the meritorious cauſe of our ſalvation, that is, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath merited this ſalvation by dying for us, in the middle part of the 10 verſe, *Who hath aboliſhed death*, that is, who hath taken away the ſting and curſe of death.

Thirdly, he lays down the inſtrumentall cauſe of our ſalvation, that is the Goſpel, in the words that I have now read to you, *And hath brought life and immortality to light through the Goſpel.* Let me firſt unlock the Cabinet of the Text, and then ſhew you what treaſure is laid up in it: briefly, *He hath brought life.* As *Calvin* well obſerves upon the Text, it is an eminent and memorable Enconium of the Goſpel, that it brings life; and what life? not a temporal life, but an eternal life; therefore there is another weighty word added to expreſs it, life and immortality, or an immortal life; a life that is not capable of corruption, an incorruptible life, that never ſhall have end; after as many millions of years as there are drops of water in the Ocean, this eternal life and immortality ſhall be the ſame ſtill. He hath brought this life to light, the Text ſays, that is, he hath revealed

it,

it, and diſcovered it, although before it was, as it were in the dark; it was myſtery, unknown to us; but now he hath revealed this myſtery, he hath revealed the way to eternal life, and he hath revealed the unconvinceable joy and happineſs that is wrapt up in it; and all this is done by the Goſpel the Text ſays, that is, by the preaching of the Goſpel, as is in the words following the Text, the 11. verſe, *Whereunto I am appointed a Preacher, and an Apoſtle, and a Teacher of the Gentiles.* Now Goſpel, according to the annotation of the word Ευαγγέλιον, Goſpel; that is as if one ſhould ſay, a good ſpel, that is good news, that was the old antient word for good news. The glad tidings of ſalvation was ſuch a welcome meſſage, that it was fit for the mouth of an Angel to publiſh, in *Luke* 2. 10. *And the Angel ſaid unto them fear not, behold, I do Goſpel you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all Nations*; or I do preach the Goſpel, the welcome meſſage of a Saviour, being come into the world, by whom eternal ſalvation may be obtained. So then the words being thus opened, the Doctrine I ſhall commend to you from them, ſhall be this.

Doct. *The knowledge of eternal life and ſalvation is diſcovered to the ſons of men by the preaching of the Goſpel.* God brings life, and immortality to light, he diſcovers it, reveals it, he makes it known; but how ſays the Apoſtle it is, by the preaching of the Goſpel. I ſhall not need to travel far to fetch in proof for this plain Doctrine, that Scripture is very remarkable, 16. *Romans* 25, 26. *Now to him that is of power to ſtabliſh you, according to my Goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, according to*

the

the revelation of the myſterie, which was kept ſecret ſince the world began; but now is made manifeſt, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the obedience of faith. The Apoſtle ſays, the myſterie, that is, the myſterie of mans ſalvation, the myſterie of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, it was kept ſecret from the beginning of the world; but was now at laſt ſays he, revealed by the Goſpel: the myſterie of mans ſalvation and redemption had been a claſped book for ever, if the Goſpel had not been a key to open it. What doth the Apoſtle mean by that Scripture, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3,4. *But if our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them*; as if he ſhould ſay, whence is it men periſh in death, and deſtruction; whence is it they are loſt, quite loſt, and periſh, without hope; ſurely it is becauſe the Goſpel is hidden from them; either they want light, or elſe want ſight; though the Goſpel ſhines about them, it ſhines not unto them, into their hearts, to give them the knowledge of the face of Jeſus Chriſt: *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt*; a ſad ſpeech. Again, whence is it ſo many glorious Title are given to the Goſpel; for example, it is called the Word of life, 2 *Phil.* 16. *Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoyce in the day of Jeſus Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.* It is called the Goſpel of the Kingdom, 24 *Mat.* 14. *And this Goſpel of the Kingdom ſhall be preached to all the world, for a*

witness unto all Nations, and then shall the end come. It is called the word of Gods grace, *Acts* 14. 3. *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signes and wonders to be done by their hands.* And it is called the Word of Reconciliation, 2 *Corinth.* 5. 19. *To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* Yea, it is called the word of Salvation, 13 *Acts* 26. *Men and Brethren, Children of the Stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.* And it is called *the Grace of God that bringeth salvation, Titus* 2. 11. Nay yet more, it is called Salvation it self: There cannot be a higher title given to it, then to call it Salvation it self, in the *Acts* 28. 28. *Be it known therefore unto you* (says the Apostle, speaking to those stubborn Jews) *That the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.* The Salvation of God, that is the Gospel, called there the Salvation of God, is sent unto the Gentiles. All these titles sufficiently clear this truth, that the knowledg of eternal Salvation is discovered by the Gospel Now for the better explication of this point, there are two *Queries* would be satisfied.

First, how, or in what respect the knowledge of Salvation may be said to be disovered by the Gospel?

Secondly, whether the knowledge of Salvation be discovered only by the Gospel?

First, how, or in what respect the knowledge of Salvation may be said to be discovered by the Gospel

Goſpel: I anſwer in theſe three or four regards.

Firſt, the Goſpel is ſaid to reveal the knowledge of ſalvation, becauſe it reveals to us the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Author of this eternal ſalvation, as he is called *Hebr.* 5. 9. *And being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal ſalvation, unto al them that obey him.* And he is called the *rock of ſalvation*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 4. *Deut.* 32.15. And he is called a *Horn of Salvation*, *Luke* 1. 69. *and hath raiſed up an Horn of ſalvation for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David.* In this regard the Goſpel may wel be compared to the Star that led the wiſe men to Jeſus Chriſt: The Goſpel is that Star that leads us to the Day-ſpring from on high, to him that is the Morning-ſtar indeed, to him that is ſalvation it ſelf, cloathed in our fleſh.

Secondly, The Goſpel may be ſaid to reveal ſalvation, in this regard, becauſe it is a means of conveying the ſpirit of grace into the ſoul, who is the applier of this Salvation. Hence it is the Goſpel is called the Miniſtration of the ſpirit, 2 *Cor.* 3. 8. *How ſhall not the miniſtration of the ſpirit be rather glorious?* and you read in *Acts* 10. 44. that while *Peter* was preaching to *Cornelius* and his Company, the Holy Ghoſt fell upon them; *while Peter yet ſpake theſe words, the Holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word:* ſo that the Holy Ghoſt was diſpenced to them in the preaching of the Goſpel.

Thirdly, The Goſpel may be ſaid to reveal ſalvation, in that it is an Inſtrument of begetting faith in the ſoul, which is the hand whereby we lay hold on this ſalvation: *Faith comes by hearing of the Goſpel*, *Rom.* 10. 17.

Fourthly, The Goſpel is ordained by God, to

be an Instrument of Regeneration, and Sanctification, and of Edification.

Of Regeneration, 1 *Corinth.* 4. 15. *For though you have ten thousand Instructors in Christ, yet have you not many Fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.*

And then it is the Instrument of our Sanctification too in *John* 17.17. *Sanctifie them by thy truth,* saith our Saviour, *for thy word is truth.*

And it is the Instrument of our Edification, or building us up in our most holy faith, *Acts* 20.32. *And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace* (that is the Gospel) *which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.*

Now then, if the Gospel be the Instrument both of our Regeneration, Sanctification, and Edification, it must needs be also the Instrument of our Salvation: that is for the first *Quære,* How the Gospel may be said to reveal Salvation, because it reveals Jesus Christ, who is the Author of this Salvation; and it is an Instrument of conveying the Spirit of grace into the heart, who is the applier of this Salvation; and works faith, which is the hand whereby we lay hold on this Salvantion, and it is the Instrument of working Regeneration, Sanctification, and Edification in us; and therefore must be the Instrument of our Salvation.

The second *Quærie* is this, But is the knowledge of Salvation revealed only by the Gospel, may some say? does not the Law also reveal Salvation? does not the Law say, *do this and live.* To this I answer: though the Law may be said in some sense to reveal the knowledge of Salvation;

yes

yes, there is a very great difference between the Laws revealing, and the Gospels revealing it, and that in these two respects especially. First, the Law does not reveal the knowledge of salvation so clearly. Secondly, the Law does not reveal the knowledge of salvation so effectually.

First, the Law does not reveal the knowledge of salvation so clearly; for it reveals it only in types, and shadows, and resemblances: therefore the Apostle says *Heb.* 10. 1. *The Law having the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.* He compares the Law to a shadow, it had a shadow of good things to come: For example, the Law told us indeed of a Saviour that was to come into the world, and the Law told us of the bloud of Jesus Christ; but it was tipified in the multitude of those bloudy Sacrifices that were offered from day to day; and it told us of heaven, and the heavenly inheritance; but it was but obscurely, it was shadowed out by an earthly *Canaan*, or the Land of promise; whereas now the Gospel brings in Jesus Christ fully and clearly exhibited; it brings in Jesus Christ as the Day-star from on high, which does enlighten us, and the Son of Righteousness that does dispel all those clouds and shadows that were in the Ceremonial Law: The Gospel does as it were draw the Curtain, that now we may with *open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord*, 2 *Corinth.* 3. *last verse*; therefore the Law does not discover the knowledge of salvation so clearly.

Secondly, the Law does not discover the knowledge of Salvation so effectually: True, the Law hath told us of Salvation, but it doth not shew us

the means whereby we may attain it; the Law shews the way, but it does not help us to walk in that way; the Law hath commanded us to obey, but it gave us no strength to perform; therefore the Apostle says, *The Law was weak because of our flesh.* Rom. 8. 3. *For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.* Again, the Apostle tells us expressly, *Heb* 7. 19. *The Law made nothing perfect.* The Law could never bring Man to Heaven, never was mortal man saved by the Law: it is true, indeed it required obedience, but it gave us no strength to perform that obedience; it exacted obedience upon the penalty of a dreadful curse, but it did not enable us to avoid that curse; for it's said, *Cursed be he that continueth not in all the words of this Law to do them* Deut, 27. 26. And it's said, *the man that doth them shall live in them.* Gal. 3. 12. Lev. 18. 5. I, but the Law gave no strength to do what it did enjoyn; I, but now the Gospel reveals the knowledge of Salvation more effectually, because as it commands us to obey, so it gives us strength to perform; the Law Commands, but it is the Gospel that helps us: How doth it help us? it helps us thus, because it directs us to Jesus Christ by whom we may have strength, *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* Isai. 45. 24. And says the Apostle, *I can do all things through Christ that strengthneth me.* Phil. 4. 13.

I, but here it may be objected; does not the Apostle say, that the Gospel is *the savour of death unto death*, as well as *the savour of life unto life.*

2 Cor.

2 Cor. 2. 16. Now, if the Gospel be the savour of death unto death, then how can it be said to bring Eternal Salvation? To this I answer.

When the Gospel is said to be the savour of death unto death, it is not spoken because the Gospel does kill and condemn simply, and in its own nature; but through the corruption of mens hearts that do not obey it, but do reject it, that do resist it. A Kings pardon you know, does not kill any by it self, but by the Contempt of a Malefactor that does reject it, and so the pardon may double the Malefactors guilt, and bring upon him a more speedy and fearful execution. So here, the Gracious pardon of God that is tendred in the Gospel, does not kill, or condemn any in it self, or in its own Nature, but through the contempt of those that do disregard it, in this regard, not simply, but accidentally, through the Corruptions of mens Hearts, and Natures; in this regard, the Gospel may be said to increase a mans curse and condemnation: Whereas now the Law in its own nature, is said to be a killing Letter, because it leaves a man in a state of death, and leaves him under a curse, and does not shew him the way at all how to avoid that curse, as the Gospel does; Therefore the Apostle says, *The Law is a killing Letter of it self, but the Spirit giveth life.* 2 Cor. 3. 6. because in the Preaching of the Gospel, the Spirit of God is conveyed into our souls, which enables us in some acceptable manner, to perform what the Gospel enjoyns; and thus you have the Point opened to you, that the knowledge of Life, and Immortality, that Eternal Salvation that is laid up for the Saints in Light, is discovered, and

revealed by the Preaching of the Goſpel. For the uſe of the Point now.

And the firſt is by way of Information; and there are four Doctrinal Inferences, or Leſſons, that we may learn from this point thus opened.

1. See how infinitely we ſtand indebted, and ingaged to our gracious God, that hath lookt upon us here in this Nation, and in this City, who hath brought us into the fellowſhip of the Goſpel, and hath kept us in that fellowſhip for ſo many years together. Oh, that we ſhould live under the ſhowres and Sun-ſhine of the glorious Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, for almoſt a hundred years together without interruption: what a ſingular Mercy is this, if we did but know how to prize it; He hath ſcarce dealt ſo with any Nation under Heaven, as he hath dealt with us: what did God ſee more in us then in *Turks*, *Indians*, and *Pagans*, that never heard of God nor Goſpel; He foreſaw how we would deſpiſe this precious Pearle, and how we would be ready to trample it under foot; God foreſaw how weary we would be of thoſe glorious Goſpel-myſteries, that are diſcovered to us from day to day, yet it did not hinder him from beſtowing this precious Jewel upon us; therefore not to us, not to us, but to his own Name be the Glory

2. A ſecond Leſſon, we may learn by way of inference is this. If the knowledge of eternal life be diſcovered in the Goſpel, then it follows, whereever God hath a Church planted, or a Church to be planted, there will ſtill be need of a powerful, quickning, ſoul-ſearching Miniſtry, for the diſcovery, and making known the Myſteries of Salvation;

on; The publique preaching Miniſtry of the Goſpel, is that ſtanding Ordinance that muſt continue in the Church of Jeſus Chriſt, ſo long as he hath a Church here upon earth, and this appears by that of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. *And he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt,* (How long) *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the Stature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.* That is, to the end of the world, God will have a ſtanding Miniſtry, wherever he hath a Church planted, or to be planted, God will have a Goſpel-ſtanding Miniſtry, till all the Saints be gathered. If this be ſo, then how juſtly are they to be reproved, that think that a Goſpel-miniſtry, of all other things may be beſt ſpared; if there be any ſuch here, mark what I ſay, you could ill want any of the four Elements, Earth, Air, Fire, or Water; you could ill want Salt, Bread, Drink, Cloathing; let me tell you, a Goſpel-miniſtry is as needful as any of theſe I have named, as Earth, Air, Fire, Water; as Salt, Bread, Drink, Cloathing; for does not *Solomon ſay*, *Pro.* 29. 18. *Where there is no viſion the people periſh*, and would you have your ſouls periſh everlaſtingly? is not our ſoul worth a whole world? It was a Noble ſpeech of *Luther*, *It were better that the Whole world were in a Combuſtion, and Confuſion, then that the Goſpel ſhould not be preached, or that any one ſoul that belongs to Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be neglected.* And it was ſpoken concerning *Chryſoſtom*, who was a

famous Light in the Church; it was better that the Sun ſhould not ſhine, then that *Chryſoſtome* ſhould not preach: and it was a witty obſervation of a Father, ſpeaking concerning the beheading of *John Baptiſt*; *Herod* took off *John Baptiſts* head, becauſe of the promiſe he made to the Damoſel, whatever ſhe ask'd him, to the halfe of his Kingdom, ſhould be granted, ſays that Father, ſpeaking of this paſſage; *Herod* might have kept his promiſe, though he had not taken off *John Baptiſts* head, for he promiſed the Damoſel, to give her to the halfe of his Kingdom; but now, ſays he, *John Baptiſts* head was worth a whole Kingdom: Pray tell me, you that have ſlight thoughts of the Goſpel, or of a Goſpel-miniſtry; does not the Scripture compare Miniſters to Planters, to Builders, to Fathers, to Remembrancers, to Starrs, to ſpiritual Guides, and to a City upon a Hill, and the like; if ever you be trees of Righteouſneſs in Gods Garden, it is a Miniſtry that hath planted you, and if ever you be ſpiritual ſtones in Gods everlaſting Building, it muſt be the Miniſtry muſt build you; if ever you be Sons and Daughters begotten to eternal Life, it is the Miniſtry muſt beget you, *For in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the Goſpel.* 1 Cor. 4. 15. Says the Apoſtle, and if ever your feet be guided into the way that leads to everlaſting life, it is a Goſpel-miniſtry muſt guide you; and if ever you be led to Jeſus Chriſt, as the *Wiſe-men* were by the Starre in the *Eaſt*, when Chriſt was born in *Bethlehem*, it muſt be theſe ſpiritual Starrs that are in the firmament of Gods Church that muſt lead you: Now judge in your ſelves therefore, whether a Goſpel-miniſtry can be ſpared.

3. The third doctrinal inference is this; If the knowledge of eternal Salvation comes by the Gospel, then it teacheth us this Lesson also; how infinitely it does concern us to prize, and fruitfully to improve our Gospel-seasons, those opportunityes God puts into our hands for the enriching of our souls; but especially, we should improve our Sabbath-day opportunityes, because Sabbaths are the Market-days of Eternity, the Markets wherein we must make provision for Eternity: Oh, how careful should we be to improve these Gospel-seasons; let me tell you, Gospel-seasons are very precious seasons, because marvellous precious things are tendred to you in the preaching of the Gospel, more precious then all the Gold of Ophir, more precious then all the Kingdoms of the world, if they were in your own power; for in the preaching of the Gospel, a precious Christ, who is the Pearl of price, worth ten thousand thousand worlds, and more worth; this precious Christ, this Pearl of Price, may now be obtained, and a precious Covenant, a Covenant made between God and the soul, this precious Covenant may now be Confirmed, and precious Evidences of Eternal Salvation may be now gained; and likewise precious Graces, and precious Faith, and precious Hope, and precious Love, Humility, Repentance, and Self-denial, these precious Graces may be now procured; a precious soul may be saved, a precious Pardon may be sealed; oh, what precious things then are tendred to you in the preaching of the Gospel; these opportunityes therefore are exceeding precious; if Christ be thine now, he is thine for ever; oh, that you

you did but know the price of theſe things that are tendred to you in the preaching of the Goſpel; if a condemned Priſoner did know how precious the Pardon that was brought to him was, would he ſlight it? here is a precious Pardon, Grace, Mercy, Peace, all tendred to you in the preaching of the Goſpel; how infinitely then does it concern us to improve our Goſpel-ſeaſons?

4. The fourth Leſſon by way of inference, is this; it lets us ſee the contempt, nay, the neglect of the Goſpel is a very dangerous thing; for if the knowledge of Salvation be brought to the ſoul by the Goſpel, then certainly he that neglects the Goſpel neglects Salvation, and Salvation it ſelf ſhall not ſave that man that deſpiſes the remedy, yea, that neglects Salvation, ſaith the Apoſtle; *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* Heb. 2. 3. As if he had ſaid, it is impoſsible to eſcape eternal Damnation, if we do but neglect this eternal Salvation: theſe are the Leſſons from this Doctrine, and that's the firſt uſe of information,

The ſecond uſe I ſhall make of this Doctrine, it is for Examination; If ſo be, the knowledge of eternal Life be brought by the Goſpel, be diſcovered, and revealed by the Goſpel, then take occaſion to call your ſelves to an account, and ſee whether this eternal Salvation be ſo diſcovered to you, that you may be partakers of it; otherwiſe, what advantage will it be to you, to hear that Life and Immortality is brought to light, unleſs this Light do ſhine into your ſouls. But may be you will ſay to me, how may we do to know that the Day-ſpring from on High, hath ſhined into my

my ſoul, that God hathcalled me out of darkneſs into his marvellous Light, that he hath diſcovered the Miſteryes of Salvation to me, even to me.

I anſwer, you may know it briefly thus; If the Light of Life be revealed to thy Soul, then certainly thy knowledge will not be a Notional knowledge only, but an Experimental knowledge; thou wilt not have a knowledge ſwimming in thy head only, but a ſoaking, and ſinking knowledge in thy heart; thou wilt not only know Chriſt, but taſte Chriſt; thou wilt taſte that hidden *Manna*, 2 *Rev.* 17. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden Manna.* Thou wilt not only know, but taſte the bitterneſs of ſin, and thou wilt ſay, *Jer.* 2 19. *it is an evil and bitter thing that I have forſaken the Lord, and that his fear is not in me.* A blind man may talk of Colours that never ſaw them, and a hungry man may talk of a full dinner that never taſted it; ſo a Carnal man may have a great deal of knowledge in his head and never reliſh nor taſte it, but he that hath the knowledge of Salvation revealed to his ſoul, he hath a Light ſhining in his heart, *Jer.* 31. 34. *And they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, ſaying, know the Lord, for they ſhall all know me, from the leaſt of them, unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord*; that is, they ſhall not need to be taught thoſe experimental truths that are written in their own hearts, by the finger of the Spirit of God: A man that hath this Life and Immortality brought to light by the Goſpel, will ſay, you need not tell me that ſin is a bitter thing, I have taſted the bitterneſs of it; you need not tell me the favour of God is ſweet, and

lovely,

lovely, oh, it is sweeter to me then life it self, you need not tell me that Jesus Christ is very Amiable, &Beautiful, I see him to be so with my eye of faith; you need not tell me there is a marvellous power in the death of Christ for the crucifying of sin, I do experimentally know it; when a man hath this experimental knowledge, he will say as the Apostle, 1 *Tim*, 1. 13. *I was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and Injurious, but I obtained Mercy because I did it ignorantly*. When a man hath the feeling and experience of spiritual Truths in his own soul, then may he be sure that Life, and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel unto him.

A third use I shall make of this Doctrine, it is of Reproof: Two sorts there are, that are justly lyable to the reproof of this Doctrine, First, it condemns and crys down that Hellish practise of the whore of *Rome*, and the Popish Clergy, who lock up the Scriptures, and keep Millions of souls from the knowledge of the Gospel, from the knowledge of the mysteries of Salvation; this is all one as if they should lock them up in the pit of Infernal darkness; for if so be, Salvation, or Eternal Life, be brought to light by the Gospel, and this Gospel be to them but as a Light in a dark Lanthorn, must not they needs inevitably perish? Oh cruel bloody Butchers! Oh mercyless mischievous Soul-destroyers: may we say of the *Romish* Synagogue, well may the whore of *Rome* be said to be drunk with blood, because she is drunk not only with the blood of the bodyes of Men, but with the blood of the Souls of men. Oh, the tender Mercies of God that hath opened our eyes to

see

ſee better things, and to free us from the bondage and ſlavery of that Antichriſtian yoke: this is a great mercy to be delivered from the poyſon of thoſe ſerpents, and a greater mercy then ever we can be thankfull for. But take this withall, I beſeech you, take heed that Popery do not creep in at a back dore of Toleration, let us bleſs God for that liberty that we have; but take heed that you do not hanker after thoſe Popiſh Doctrines, that may poyſon the ſoul, and that will provoke God to remove his Candleſtick from amongſt us.

A ſecond ſort to be reproved, are thoſe that grow weary of the Goſpel: I but may be you will ſay, are there any ſo bad in our days, as to be weary of the Goſpel: yea my brethren, many there are that are weary of the truths of it, many that are weary of the profeſſion of it, many that are weary of the power and practiſe of it.

Firſt, many there are that are weary of the truths of the Goſpel, that chuſe rather to be raking in the ſtinking puddles of Popery, Arminianiſme, Socinianiſme, and other damnable hereſies, as the Apoſtle calls them, they chooſe theſe rather then the clear fountain of truth revealed in the Goſpel: oh, theſe are in a very dangerous condition, when men chooſe rather to be Maſters of new opinions, then to be diſciples of old truths; theſe men may be ſaid to be weary of the Goſpel.

Secondly, Are there not ſome that are weary of the profeſſion of the Goſpel, ſuch as are Atheiſts, and prophane Libertines, Swearers, Drunkards, and others of that Gang, that could be contented that the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould be extinguiſhed, that the Candle might be

put

put out, ſo they may but ſin more freely: but our Saviour hath read their doom, *John* 3. 19. *This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather then light, becauſe their deeds are evil.*

Thirdly, Are there not ſome weary of the power and practice of the Goſpel? ſuch are hypocrites, Apoſtates, luke-warme Profeſſors, and carnal Goſpellers, that have (it is true) a form of godlineſs, but are as farre from the power and practice of it, as Pagans are from the profeſſion of it: Are not theſe worthy think you to be reproved; yea, God reproves them, and his Word reproves them, and their own conſciences will one day reprove them; nay, that Goſpel which now they deſpiſe and undervalue, will then arraign, indict, and condemn them, at that great day: for if the Lord Jeſus Chriſt will come in flames of fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his Goſpel, as it is 2 *Theſ.* 1. 8. what will become of them that are weary of it, that deſpiſe it, that do undervalue it.

The fourth and laſt Uſe (to ſhut up this point) is this, If the knowledge of ſalvation be diſcovered by the preaching of the Goſpel, then let me preſs upon you three very neceſſary and ſeaſonable Duties.

Firſt, learn to prize the Goſpel while you have it, labour to know the worth of it now you have it, leſt God let you ſee the worth of it in the want of it, when it is too late: God will never hang a Jewel upon a Swines ſnout; God will never long continue the Goſpel in mercy to a People that do not value it. True indeed, ſome there are that

that are ready to ſay of the Goſpel, as *Naaman* the *Aſſyrian* in like caſe; *Are not* Abana *and* Pharphar, *rivers of* Damaſcus, *better then all the waters of* Iſrael, *may I not waſh in them to be clean*; So ſome will ſay, Are not the doctrines of Popery, and other corrupt doctrines better then all the doctrines of the Goſpel. But I hope you have not ſo learnt Chriſt: oh, learn to prize the Goſpel as the doctrine of your ſaluation, as the evidence of your inheritance; do you learn to prize it as the tree of life, which is for the healing of the Nations, as the pledge of the hope you have of eternal life: labour for ſuch an eſteem of the Goſpel as *David* had, *Pſalm* 119. 111, *Thy teſtimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoycing of my heart*: Oh, do you learn to prize the Goſpel as the greateſt privilege that ever God did beſtow upon you next to Jeſus Chriſt, and his Spirit.

A ſecond Duty I would preſs upon you is this, not only to prize the Goſpel, but to make uſe of it, and improve it for your own ſpiritual advantage: *Yet a little while* (ſaith our Saviour) *is the light with you, walk while you have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you; for he that walketh in darkneſs knoweth not whether he goeth*, *John* 12.35. Oh, that you and I could learn to make hay while the Sun ſhines; oh, that we could improve theſe opportunities while we do enjoy them. If ſo be the Goſpel ſhould be taken away from you, before your peace is made with God, before you have gotten Jeſus Chriſt into your hearts, before the Covenant between God and your Souls be ſealed; oh, how ſad and dolefull would your conditions be;

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ſure I am we were never in ſo much danger of loſing the Goſpel as at this day, for our barrenneſs, and unfruitfulneſs, and wearineſs of the Goſpel. We are ready to ſay, *Mal.* 1. 13. *What a wearineſs is it to ſerve the Lord*; and for our contempt of the means of grace. Now if ſuch a day ſhould come as God threatens *Micah* 3. 6. *Therefore night ſhall be unto you, that ye ſhall not have a viſion, and it ſhall be dark unto you, that ye ſhall not divine, and the Son ſhall go down over the Prophets, and the day ſhall be dark over them.* If ſuch a day ſhould come as God threatens *Amos* 8. 11. *Behold the days come ſaith the Lord God, that I will ſend a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirſt for water; but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they ſhall wander from ſea to ſea, and from the North even to the Eaſt, they ſhall run to and fro to ſeek the word of the Lord, and ſhall not finde it:* Oh, what a black dolefull diſmall day would this be.

Thirdly, it ſhould teach us to walk worthy of the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. 27. *Only let your converſation be as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt.* Oh, let us learn to lead Goſpel lives under Goſpel light; let it never be ſaid to us, that the Goſpel is a grace to us, but we are a diſgrace to the Goſpel, I beſeech you my brethren, ſtudy to live up to your light, ſeeing God hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, walk as children of the light: follow that golden rule of the Apoſtle, in *Phil.* 4. 8. *Finally brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on*

theſe

these things, speak of these things: Oh could we but once learn to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light; could we once be brought to this, to repent of our Gospel sins, may be the Lord may lengthen our tranquility, may be God may revive his work in the midst of our days, may be glory may yet dwell in our Land, and make us a name and praise throughout the whole earth: But if we go on in a course of Rebellion, if we rebell against the light, if we despise the means of grace, if we undervalue those precious seasons of salvation that are tendred to us; if we grief the holy Spirit of God from day to day, and cause him to withdraw from us, what a black and dolefull day may seise upon us. The Lord work these things upon every one of our hearts, that still the Gospel in its power and purity may be continued to us.

Christs Provision for Mans Direction.

Text, Isaiah 40. 11.

He shall feed his Flock, like a Shepherd, he shall gather his Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

THe first verse of this Chapter will tell you what the scope of the Chapter is; namely, to speak comfort to the poor captive *Jews* in their return from *Babylon*, and the comfort that is here proclaimed, it is derived from a double Spring, 1. From the Promulgation of the Gospel. 2. From the coming of Jesus Christ in the Flesh, who is the Marrow of the Gospel. 1. From the Promulgation of the Gospel, and that is amplified two ways; from the Herald that proclaims it, and by the place where it was proclaimed. 1. By the Herald that proclaimed it, namely, *John* the *Baptist*, *called the voyce of one crying in the wilderness*; *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desart a high way for our God.* 2. It is amplyfied by the place where it should be proclaimed, namely, in *Sion*, or *Jerusalem*: in the 9th. verse, *Oh Sion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high Mountain,*

Mountain; *oh Jeruſalem, that bringeſt good tidings, lift up thy voyce with ſtrength*, lift it up, be not afraid; ſay to the Cities of *Judah*, behold your God. Then Chriſts coming in the fleſh, that is deſcribed two ways. 1. By his Terrour to his enemyes. 2. By his mild carriage and behaviour towards his own people. By his Terrour towards his enemyes, in the foregoing verſe, the 10 verſe, *Behold the Lord will come with a ſtrong hand, and his Arme ſhall rule for him, behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.* Then he is deſcribed here by his meek, and mild carriage towards his People, in the words I have read unto you. *He ſhall feed his Flock like*, &c.

Let me firſt open the Terms of the Text, and then come to ſome points of Inſtruction. *He ſhall feed.* The Government of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in his Church, and towards his Choſen, is expreſt by three Names; He is call'd a Ruler, a Leader, and a Shepherd. He is called a Ruler מושל in the *Hebrew*, in *Micah* 5.2. *But thou Beth-leem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Iſrael, whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting.* Now Jeſus Chriſt rules 3 ways. 1. By his Commanding power. 2. By his Compelling power. 3. By his Perſwading power. He hath a Commanding power, *All Power is given to me in Heaven and Earth* Mat. 18. 35. He hath a Compelling power, *Thoſe mine enemyes which would not that I ſhould reign over them bring hither and ſlay them before me.* Luke 19.27. Then he hath likewiſe a Perſwading power, *Gen.* 9. 27. *God ſhall perſwade Japhet, and he ſhall*

dwell in the Tents of Shem. 2 ly. His Government is expreſt by this Name, *He is a Leader to his people.* Now Chriſt is a Leader to his People 3 ways. 1. By teaching of his People: his very enemyes did acknowledge it. *Mar.* 12. 14. *We know thou teacheſt the way of God in truth.* He teacheth them by going before them in a way of good example, *Joh.* 13. 15, *I have given you an example, that you ſhould do as I have done.* He Leads them likewiſe by drawing of them. *Cant.* 1. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* Then, as he is a Ruler, and a Leader, ſo he is a Shepherd: his Government is compriſed under this Name, *He ſhall feed his Flock like a Shepherd.* And here in the Text, where under the name of *Feeding*, is compriſed all the neceſſary attendances, and accommodations that conduce to the ſafety, and welfare of the Flock; ſuch as providing of them Paſture, and protecting of them from the danger and miſchief of Wolves and Lyons, and Beaſts of Prey; and likewiſe in preventing their ſtragling and wandring in the Wilderneſs: And in curing of thoſe Diſeaſes that are incident to Sheep: All theſe are meant by *Feeding.* Oh, the Richneſs, and Compleatneſs of this precious Redeemer, well may the Apoſtle ſay, *He is able to ſave to the utmoſt thoſe that come to God by him.* And well may the Apoſtle ſay, *Chriſt is all and in all,* becauſe he is both the Ruler, Leader, and Shepherd; the Prince, and Captain of our Salvation, and Saviour, and all,

He ſhall gather his Lambs with his Arms. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath a tender care of all his Sheep, that none of them be loſt, as he ſays in that Heavenly Prayer, *Joh.* 17. 11. *While I was with*

them

them in the world, I kept them thy Name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. I, but he hath the most tender and pitiful compassion towards those that are his Lambs, that is young Beginners, Babes in Christ, those he gathers in his Arms: so the Text tells us, those he carries in his bosom, that is, he deals favourably with them, those he cherishes with all indulgence; *He does not quench the smoaking Flax, nor break the bruised reed.* Matth. 12. 20.

Then he gently leads those that are with young, or those that give suck; the *Hebrew word* עירה signifies both, either those that are with young, or those that give suck. The Prophet here in the Text alluds to the manner of *Jacobs* dealing with his Flocks; See what a compassionate man that good man was, as you may read, *Gen.* 33. 13. *The flocks and the herds that are with young, they are with me, and if men should over drive them but one day, all the flocks would dye.* What a care had *Jacob* of all his flocks, especially of those that were with young: so the Lord Christ he gently leads those that are with young; that is, weak Christians, such as are eas'ly offended, such as are dejected, and discouraged, such as are full of infirmities and imperfections, he gently leads them; that is, he exercises a great deal of pity, and patience, and compassion and tenderness towards them; *In all their afflictions he is afflicted with them, Isai.* 63. 9. He hath Sympathizing Bowels towards those that are full of Infirmity, his Bowels are troubled as it were for them; *Jer.* 31. 20. *Is Ephraim a dear Son, is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember*

remember him still; therefore my Bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord: So that here is gentleness in bearing with them, and patience in suffering of them: In a word, the Lord Jesus Christ, he is a meek, a gentle, a milde, a compassionate Saviour, that is the summe of the whole verse; he is of a very sweet, amiable, plyable disposition: As God hath fitted him with a Body, so he hath fitted him with a Heart to be a merciful, and compassionate Redeemer. The words being thus opened, there are two things in them especially presented to your view. 1. Christs relation to his People. 2 ly. His milde carriage towards them in that relation.

1. Christs relation to his People, that you have in these words, *He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd.*

2 ly. You have his Meek, Milde, and Gracious carriage towards them; he does both Protect them, and Feed them, and Pity them, and gathers them in his Arms, and caryes them in his bosom, and gently Leads them; and accordingly there are these two Poynts of Doctrine that are most eminently, and clearly held forth in the Text.

The first Doctrine is this; *That Jesus Christ is that Blessed Shepherd, that is able both to feed and protect his People here, and to give them eternal Life hereafter.*

The second Doctrine; *That the Lord Jesus Christ in his carriage towards his People, hath a tender respect to their Infirmyties:*

I begin with the first Doctrine: The Lord Jesus Christ is that blessed Shepherd that is abundantly able

ible to feed and protect his People here, and to give them eternal life hereafter.

For the proofs of this Doctrine take two or three Scriptures, in *John* 10. 11. *I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his life for the Sheep:* and in *Hebr.* 13. 20. He is called the great Shepherd of the Sheep. *Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the bloud of the everlasting Covenant, &c.* And he is called the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, in 1 *Pet.* 2. 20. *For ye were as Sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls:* so that doubtless Jesus Christ is the most blessed, the best, the greatest, the sweetest Shepherd that ever was, as will appear be these 4 reasons.

First, because he hath the greatest care over them.

Secondly, because he hath the greatest love to his Sheep.

Thirdly, because he hath the greatest power that ever Shepherd had.

Fourthly, because he hath the greatest reward for them that can possibly be bestowed.

First, Jesus Christ hath the greatest care over his Sheep, for he seeks them when they are lost, I come says he, to seek and to save those which were lost, *Luke* 19. 10. *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* And he gathers them from the ends of the world, he fetches them from all corners of the earth; there is not one of his sheep that is, not one that belongs to the election of grace, but in what place soever he be, though among Pagans, and Heathens, and In-

fidels, of what condition soever he be, whether high or low, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, of what calling or imployment soever: As some will be ready to complain and say, I am lockt up under a Calling, I would be better if my Calling would let me: I but there is not one of Christs sheep that belongs to the election of grace, though he be lockt up under a Calling, but the Lord Jesus Christ will seek him out in what Condition or Calling soever he be. Thats the first reason, he hath the greatest care over his sheep, to gather them into his Fold.

Second reason, because he hath the greatest love to his sheep, such love as the like was never heard of: *Greater love hath no man then this, that a man lay down his life for his friend, John* 15. 13. There cannot be greater love manifested then this: but such love hath the Lord Jesus Christ, he hath laid down his life, that good Shepherd laid down his life for his sheep, as in the forenamed place, *John* 10. 11. *I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* You know *Jacob* sheweth a great deal of love to his sheep, in that (as he tells you) *he was in the day time parched with heat, the drought consumed him, and in the night time pinched with frost:* and he broke his sleep many times to watch his sheep, *Gen.* 31. 40. *My sleep says he departed from mine eyes.* That was great love; but *David* shewed greater love to his Flocks, *Psalm* 78. 70. *he followed the Ewes great with young,* when God took him from the Sheepfolds to weld the Scepter. And he shewed yet greater love to his Flock, as he tells you in 1 *Sam.* 17. 34, 35. *And David said unto Saul, thy servant*

kept

kpt his Fathers ſheep, and there came a Lion and a bear, and took a Lamb out of the flock, and I went out after him, and ſmote him, and delivered it out of his mouth, and when he aroſe againſt me, I caught him by his beard, and ſmote him, and ſlew him; thy ſervant ſlew both the Lion and the Bear: David ventured very far, he ventured his life for one Lamb of the Fock; but Jeſus Chriſt, that bleſſed Shepherd, did not only venture his life, but he laid down his life, for his ſheep; and he did not venture to graple with an ordinary Lion, but with *that roaring Lion that walks about ſeeking whom he may devour:* Nay he did not only wreſtle with that roaring Lyon, but with all the powers of darkneſs, *he wreſtled with principalities and powers*; Nay, he wraſtled with a wrath of a ſin-revenging God, and all that he might ſave his poor ſheep: therefore never was there ſuch a loving Shepherd as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thats the ſecond reaſon.

Thirdly, he hath the greateſt power and ability that ever Shepherd had; for this is extraordinary, that he makes all the ſheep he hath, all his ſheep are the workmanſhip of his hands, *Pſalm* 100. 3. *Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves; we are his people, and the ſheep of his paſture.* He hath that power that he can do whatſoever pleaſeth him in heaven and in earth: *All power in heaven and earth is given to him Mat.* 28. 18. He hath that power that he is able to deliverr his ſheep from the gates of hell; he hath ſaid, *that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt them, Mat.* 16. 18. He hath that power that he can do that for his ſheep that all the world,

world, and all the Princes in the world cannot do for them; and therefore he must needs be the best Shepherd. Thats the third reason.

Fourthly, he hath the greatest reward also to bestow upon every one of his sheep: Alas his sheep give nothing to him: *My goodness does not extend to thee, Psalm* 16. 2. We can bestow nothing upon this blessed Shepherd, he hath no need of any thing we have; but he bestows a very rich portion upon his sheep, a glorious reward, he feeds them, he cloaths them, he protects them here in this world, and gives them eternal life hereafter.

First, this blessed Shepherd feeds all his sheep; he feeds them first by his Word, and then by his Sacraments.

He feeds them by his Word, by sending his Messengers as under Shepherds, to feed his Flock: It is a Gospel promise, that in *Jeremiah* 3. 15. *I will give you Pastors according to my mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* And it was one end of our Saviours ascention into heaven, and a great blessing we have by it; he ascended into heaven that he might give gifts unto men, *Ephes.* 4. 8, 11, 12, 13 verses; *Wherefore he saith when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men; and he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* He gave gifts to men, he did not only give extraordinary gifts, such as Apostles, and Prophets, and Evangelists; but ordinary gifts to Pastors and Teachers, for the building up of his own body.

And

And as he feeds his ſheep with his Word, ſo with his Sacraments: and here is ſuch feeding as you did never hear the like, for this bleſſed Shepherd feeds his ſheep with his own fleſh and blood, his own fleſh that was crucified to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice; and his own blood that was ſhed to quench the fire of Gods wrath that was kindled againſt them: this is that our Saviour tells you of in *John* 6. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he ſhall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world.* And in *Revel.* 1. 5. *He hath loved us, and waſht us from our ſins in his blood.* As they ſay of the Pelican, when her young ones are ready to die, ſhe opens her breaſt with her bill, and feeds them with her bloud; ſo the Lord Jeſus Chriſt feeds every one of his ſheep with his fleſh and bloud.

Again, he feeds the ſouls of his ſheep with the graces of his own bleſſed Spirit, as faith, repentance, love humility, ſincerity, and the like, which are ſpiritual food, ſuitable to the ſpiritual nature of the ſoul.

So he feeds his ſheep with the promiſes, which are ſaid to be breaſts of conſolation, *Iſaiah* 66. 11. *That ye may ſuck and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of conſolation, that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.* With the breaſts of conſolation, that is, with the precious promiſes. And this is that which that good King *Hezekiah* intended in that ſpeech of his *Iſaiah* 38. 16. *Oh Lord by theſe things men live, and in all theſe things is the life of my ſpirit, ſo wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.* Theſe precious promiſes made

good

good to my soul, by these do men live, and these are the life of my Spirit. Thus you see, how this blessed Shepherd feeds his Sheep. But yet more, He does not only feed his Sheep, but he gives them Stomachs also; look as it is in poynt of knowledge, we are not able to see him of our selves, we cannot see him without him, for he is our Light: and as in point of performance we are not able to believe on him, nor come unto him without him, for he is our strength, so here neither can we feed on Jesus Christ, nor the promises, nor the graces of his Spirit, untill he gives us a mouth to taste these things; therefore when the Apostle exhorts us, as new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the word, that we may grow thereby; if so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, as if he should have said, you cannot feed, unless you have tasted of this blessed Saviour, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2, 3.

Secondly, as he feeds, so he cloaths his Sheep; here amongst men the Sheep cloath the Shepherd, the Fleece of of the sheep cloathes the Shepherd; But here, this blessed Shepherd cloathes every one of his Sheep; he cloaths them with costly raiment indeed, *Ezek.* 16. 10, 11, 12. *I cloathed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with Badgers skin, and I girded thee about with fine linnen, and I covered thee with Silk; I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a Chain upon thy neck, and I put a Jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful Crown upon thy head; thus wast thou decked with Gold and Silver, and thy rayment was of fine Linnen, and Silk, and Broidered work.* Therefore it is that you read that the Apostle bids us to *put on the*

the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 13. 14. He cloaths us with the Robe of his own Righteousnes, He covers us with the garments of Salvation, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her self with her Jewels, *Isai.* 61. 10.

Thirdly, he deos protect his Sheep and watches over them from Morning to Evening, he hath his eye continually upon them, therefore *David* speaking of the Lords being his Shepherd, then says he, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staffe, they comfort me,* Psal. 23. 4.

Fourthly and lastly, He gives to his Sheep Eternal Life, *Joh.* 10. 28. *And I give unto my Sheep Eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

Thus you have the Point opened; *That Jesus Christ is that Blessed Shepherd, who is abundantly able to feed, and protect his People here, and to give them Eternal Life hereafter*, because he hath the greatest care over them, the greatest love to them, the greatest power that ever Shepherd had, and the greatest reward to give them that can posibly be bestowed.

Now for the Uses of this Point, and they are Three, by way of Instruction, Examination or Tryal, and Exhortation.

First, by way of Instruction, oh, see the Blessed, the Happy, the comfortable Condition of all those that have a part and interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, this Blessed Shepherd: what tongue of Men or Angels is able to express the happy and blessed

bleſſed condition of that man that hath gotten Jeſus Chriſt for his Portion? ſuch a one ſhall be ſure of Food, of Cloathing, of Protection, of Joy, of Comfort, of Happineſs, of Eternal Life, and what not: oh, how may that ſoul dance for joy, that hath gotten Jeſus Chriſt to be his Shepherd; ſurely it is a comfortable, and heart-chearing meditation in theſe turbulent and ſtormy times, when the Church of God hath ſo many enemies, and ſo few friends; when the Antichriſtian Faction roars againſt the little Flock of this bleſſed Shepherd, like ſo many Bears to devour them; here is the comfort, Jeſus Chriſt ſticks as cloſe to his Flock, as ever *David* did to his Flock, when the Lyon and the Bear came to make a prey of them. *Fear not little Flock* (ſays our Saviour) *it is your Fathers good pleaſure to give you a Kingdom*, Luke 12. 32. As he ſaid when he was ſailing in the Boat with *Ceſar*, the Boat-man beginning to be afraid becauſe of the tempeſtuouſneſs of the waters, Fear not man, thou carryeſt *Ceſar* and all his Fortunes with him; ſo may it be ſaid of every one that hath Jeſus Chriſt in the Boat with him, let him not fear: true indeed, the Ship wherein Chriſt and his Sheep are, may be toſſed, but it can never be over-turned, becauſe the Shepherd and Pilot are in it; therefore, happy is the condition of all thoſe that have an intereſt in this Bleſſed Shepherd. But on the contrary, oh, the deplorable and deſperate condition of all thoſe that have not Jeſus Chriſt for their Shepherd, what are they think you? they are juſt in ſuch a caſe as God threatneth *Babylon* ſhall be, *Iſai.* 13. 14. God ſays, *that Babylon ſhall be as the chaſed Roe, and*

and as a Sheep that no man taketh up. This is the case of every one that is yet out of Christ exposed, to be a prey to that roaring Lyon that walketh about seeking whom he may devour; those that have not an interest in Christ, God threatens them, *Hosea* 4. 16. *I will feed them as a Lamb in a large place, I will feed them,* what is the meaning of that? *I will let them wander,* the same *Hebrew* word רעה that signifies to *feed,* signifies to *let them wander, Numb.* 14.33. *God let the children of Israel wander in the wilderness for fourty years together*: So God lets those that have not an interest in Christ, to wander in the Wilderness to their own Destruction. Oh, that God would open the eyes of those that have not yet secured their interest in Jesus Christ, that they may see what they are, and where they are, and what danger they are exposed to. So much of the first Use of instruction.

The second Use is by way of Examination; how neerly does it concern every one of us, to call our selves to an account, whether we be in the number of Christs Sheep or no? otherwise, we can have no comfort by this Doctrine. But may be you will say to me, How shall we do certainly to know that we are the Sheep of Christ, and that Christ is that Sheherd that feeds us like a Flock? For answer to this; We cannot curiously pry into Gods decree, to tell you who are not his Seep; for it may be there are many that belongs to the Election of Grace; that is, many are the Sheep of Christ, that are not yet called, nor converted, that are wandring in the Wilderness yet; and though the Lord will not suffer them to wander to Destruction, yet for the present, they are not brought into

into the Folds; therefore we cannot say, who are not his Sheep, we cannot say who are Reprobate; we may know who are Elected, but we cannot know who are Reprobated; we can tell who are his Sheep, but we cannot tell who are not his Sheep: Now they that are his Sheep, that are Converted and brought home to the Folds of Christ, they may be known by these four signs.

First, if thou art a Sheep of Jesus Christ, certainly thy Shepherd hath set his mark upon thee, whereby he does know thee, and will own thee at the great day of his appearing, *Joh.* 10. 14. *I am the good Shepherd, and know my Sheep, and am known of mine*, I know every one of my Sheep, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *The Lord knoweth them that are his*, he knows them with a distinguishing knowledge, There are, and will be, at the great and dreadful day of Jesus Christ, abundance that will claim acquaintance with Jesus Christ; oh, what seeking will there be to find his favour at that great day, seeking, and sueing, and crying with tears of blood, for his favour at that day; many will claime acquaintance, and say, Lord, Lord, *Matth.* 7. 22. 23. *Have not we prophesied in thy name, have not we heard thee teach in our Synagogues, have not we heard thy Messengers which thou hast sent in thy name teaching on the Lords day, and on the week day; nay, have not we sate at thy Table with thee in the use of the Sacramont, of thy Body and Blood?* to whom the Lord Christ will say; *I know you not*, why? because he does not see his Mark upon them, nay, they themselves, when their consciences are once awakened, and they begin to look and search for the Mark, they cannot find it upon themselves,

and

and therefore they will hear that dreadfull ſentence, *Mat.* 25. *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

But you will ſay, what is this mark whereby Jeſus Chriſt knows his ſheep, and whereby they may know that they are his? I anſwer. This mark is the holy Spirit of God, which he beſtows upon every true believer, 1 *Corinth.* 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord is one ſpirit*; that is, he that is united to Chriſt, hath the ſame ſpirit that Chriſt hath, hath one and the ſame ſpirit that Chtiſt hath, *Rom* 8. 9. *Now if any man hath not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*: If any man have not this mark upon him, the ſpirit of Chriſt, our Saviour will never own that man for his. Hence it is the Spirit of God is compared to a ſeal or mark, *Epheſ.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe.* If thou haſt received this mark, this ſeal of the Spirit of God upon thy ſoul, thou maiſt be aſſured that thou art one of Chriſts ſheep, as if thou didſt ſee thy name written in the Book of life. I but here it may be demanded, But may not this ſeal, or this mark be counterfeited? may not a man be miſtaken, and deceived, in thinking he hath this mark, the Spirit of God, when indeed he hath it not? To this I anſwer; yes, it is poſſible for a man to be miſtaken; and therefore the Apoſtle ſo often preſſes this duty of Examination, 2 *Corinth.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, that Jeſus Chriſt is in you except you be reprobates.* And let every man prove his own works: the work of grace in his

heart let him prove it, *Galat.* 6. 4. *Then ſhall he have rejoying in himſelf alone, and not in another:* he ſhall have rejoyting in the teſtimony of his own conſcience, and not in the witneſs of anothers tongue: therefore we ſhould be examining our hearts what operations the Spirit of God hath had upon our ſpirits, whether it hath been an enlightning, a quickning, a convincing, a heart-warming, a ſealing, and a healing ſpirit, Certainly the healing and ſealing work of the Spirit goes together, as I have formerly ſhewed you. Many boaſt of the Spirit of God; they queſtion not but they have the Spirit of God; but I told you the Spirit of God never ſets his ſeal to a blank; there is firſt ſome work of the Spirit of God upon the ſoul, enlightning, convincing, quickning and drawing the heart to Jeſus Chriſt.

So we ſhould examine the fruits and effects of the Spirit of God upon our ſouls. Now there are 4 fruits eſpecially whereby a man may know he hath *received, not the ſpirit that is of the world, but the ſpirit that is of God,* 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. by theſe four effects.

Firſt, An unfeigned love to the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, that is one effect of the Spirit of God, that proves Jeſus Chriſt hath ſet his mark upon him that hath it, *John* 13, 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.* This is a mark I ſet upon my ſheep. So 1 *John* 4. *chap.* 7, 8, 12 *verſes. Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love,* And in the 12. verſe. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* The

The second Effect whereby we may know the Spirit of God is bestowed upon us, is this, namely constancy in our profession, and stedfastness in the ways of truth: this is one certain mark of the Spirit of God, when a man can hold fast his profession, and that without wavering, can keep close to the truth. How did *Job* approve himself to be one that belonged to God; *My foot hath held his steps* (saith he) *his way have I kept, and not declined, Job.* 23. 11. And how did *David* prove himself to be one of his sheep: *I have chosen the way of truth, and I have stuck unto thy testimonies, Psalm.* 119. 30. 31. That is a dreadfull Scripture in the 2 Epistle of St. *John* 9. *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.* He speaks of transgression in Judgement, in running into corrupt Opinions, and he that abides not in the Doctrine of God, but falls from the truths of Christ, he hath no part in God.

A third Effect is this, a zeal for Gods glory, his cause, his truth especially in evil times. That man that can stand up for God, when others forsake him, and sin against him: that man that can be most zealous in maintaining of Gods truth, and can say with *David* in *Psalm* 69. 9. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.* And *Psalm* 119. 158. *I beheld the transgressor, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word.* By this may we know the Spirit of God is in us.

The fourth Effect is sympathy and compassion towards our Brethren that are in afflictions and misery: if one member suffer, all the rest of the members suffer with it: when we can sigh in their

sorows, and bleed in their wounds, and be affected with their miseryes, and calamities, as if they were our own. By these affects we may know whether we have received the mark of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ. That is the first signe if you have received the Mark of Christ.

Secondly, If thou be a Sheep of Christ, thou art returned from thy former wandrings. 1 *Pet.* 2. 25. *Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd, and Bishop of our souls.* Canst thou say, there hath been a work of Conversion wrought on thy soul? Once thou wast unprofitable, but now art profitable; once thou wert wandring in the wilderness of sin, but now thou art brought home to Jesus Christ: Is there a work of Conversion wrought in thy soul? canst not thou say now, I am not the same man I was, the same woman I was; certainly if there be a returning from your ways of wandring, and walking in paths of new obedience, and keeping in the Fold of Christ, then you are the Sheep of Christ.

Thirdly, If thou be Sheep of Jesus Christ, thou mayst know it by thy carriage towards thy Shepherd; if thou art a Sheep of Christ, thou wilt know thy Shepherd, thou wilt know and see so much sweetness, fulness, and all-sufficiency in him, that thou wilt say, none but Christ, none but Christ, thou wilt count all things but dross and dung in comparison of Christ.

Secondly, Thou wilt hear his voyce, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* Joh. 10.27. Now to hear the voyce of Christ, is to be able to discern his voyce, from the voyce of strangers; The Spouse was able to discern the voice

voice of her Beloved, *Cant.* 2. 8. *The voyce of my Beloved.* The great work he was to do, to work out redemption for me; he was to do, and ſuffer much, but all could not daunt him, *But he comes leaping on the Mountains, and skipping on the Hills.* Then they follow him: Chriſts ſheep have not only the Ear-mark to hear his voyce, but alſo the Foot-mark, they follow him whetherſoever he goes; when Chriſt calls them, they ſay, *Loe, here we are*; they follow him, by imitating him in his Patience, Meekneſs, Humility, *&c.* And if thou wilt ſtudy how to be like him, that thou mayſt be made more and more conformable to his Image, by thy carriage towards thy Shepherd, thou mayſt know if thou art his Sheep, thou wilt know him, hear his voyce, follow him, and labour to be made conformable to him,

A fourth mark whereby thou mayſt know whether thou art a Sheep of Jeſus Chriſt, is this, thou mayſt know it by thy carriage towards the Flock; that is, towards thy fellow-Servants, towards thoſe that are the members of Jeſus Chriſt: It is obſerved of Sheep, that they are the moſt profitable creatures you can name; ſo, if thou be a ſheep of Jeſus Chriſt, thou wilt not be an unprofitable burthen in thy ſtation, but thou wilt be fruitful in thy place, and profitable to others. 1 *Cor.* 10. 33. *Even as I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking my own profit, but the profit of many that they may be ſaved.* And ſheep as they are profitable, ſo they are innocent, and harmleſs creatures, they wrong, and injure none; ſo if thou be one of the ſheep of Chriſt, thou wilt be harmleſs, *Phil.* 2. 15. *That ye may be blameleſs,*

and harmleſs, the ſons of God without Rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Nation. The *Greek* word for Harmleſs is there, ἀκέραιοι, which ſignifies *without Horns*, not puſhing one another: if you be the ſheep of Chriſt, you will dearly love one another; but if you bite and devour one another, you are Dogs and not Sheep.

Thirdly, Sheep are contented with their Paſture; oh! if thou be a ſheep of Jeſus Chriſt, thou wilt bleſs God in any State and Condition whatſoever thou art in: thou wilt ſay, if I have gotten Jeſus Chriſt, no matter, how poor, and low, and deſpicable my Condition on earth be.

Fourthly, Sheep uſually are united one to another, they go in Flocks and Herds, they do not willingly forſake one another: If thou be a ſheep of Chriſt, thou wilt *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Eph. 4. 3. Thou wilt not forſake the Aſſembly of Gods Saints. *Heb.* 10. 25. Oh my Brethren, you ſhould labour to find theſe ſheep-marks upon your ſouls.

A third Uſe, It is for Exhortation. If Jeſus Chriſt be the bleſſed Shepherd, as you have heard him deſcribed, that hath the greateſt care, and love, and power, and reward; oh! what an invitation might this be to every one to come to Jeſus Chriſt, and to ſtand out no longer: many perſwaſions have been tendered to you many hundred times, and yet ſome of you never brought home to Jeſus Chriſt to this day: oh, that this might be that bleſſed day wherein Jeſus Chriſt and ſome wandering ſheep may be brought together; Conſider who calls thee, it is not a Judge, but a Shepherd; and conſider why he calls,

not

not to hurt, but to heal thee; not to kill, but to cure thee; not to puniſh, but to pity thee; oh, think therefore with thy ſelf, that thou heareſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (to uſe a homely Phraſe) as it were, whiſtling after thee, as he doth in the miniſtry of his word; ſometimes he comes with ſecret whiſperings, ſometimes he comes openly, whiſtling, ſpeaking, calling, crying in the ears of ſinners: Oh, do but think that thou heardeſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt calling, and crying after thee, why wilt thou dye, and periſh? why wilt thou be loſt when thou mayſt have a Saviour. Oh, but ſays the poor ſoul, I fear, I fear that I am ſo diſeaſed, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt will not look upon me: Remember, that this Shepherd is compared to a Shepherd that hath healing under his wings. *Mal.* 4. 2.

But ſays the ſoul, I am afraid I have ſo diſpleaſed him, he will never own me; remember he is a meek, gentle, and compaſsionate Saviour. There are two things that make men afraid, they are Pride, and Fury; theſe are not in Chriſt, *I am meek and lowly*, ſays he, *Mat.* 11. 29. and fury is not in me: But I am loſt, ſays the poor ſheep, Jeſus Chriſt will ſeek that that is loſt; but if I do come, will he certainly own me, and look upon me? I anſwer, look upon the comfortable Scripture. *Luk.* 15. 4,5,6. *What man of you having a hundred ſheep, if he looſe one of them, doth not leave the Ninty and Nine in the Wilderneſs and go after that which is loſt until he find it; and when he hath found it, he layeth it on his ſhoulders, rejoycing; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends, and neighbours, ſaying unto them, rejoyce with me, for*

I have found my sheep which was lost. There are three or four things very observable in that Parable, which I would have every poor sinner that is afraid to come to Christ to look upon.

First, observe the Shepherd he leaves ninety and nine in the Wilderness, and goes and seeks after that one sheep that is lost. Observe, if there be but one sheep lost or missing, the Lord Jesus Christ bestows as much pains and care in seeking that one sheep, as if that all the sheep were lost: there was but one sheep missing, yet he hath so much care of that one, that he leaves all the ninety and nine to seek that. The Lord Jesus Christ hath so much care of every one of his sheep, as if he had but one sheep to care for: as the Sun for example would shine upon the world though there were but one man in it to shine upon: so this blessed Son of righteousness, if but one sheep be lost, he seeks after that one,

Secondly, observe the Shepherd there seeks the sheep before ever the sheep seek the Shepherd. The Lord Jesus prevents us with his mercies; we cannot seek him till he first seek us, *Psalm* 119. last verse you have *Davids* Prayer, *I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandements.*

Thirdly, observe when he hath found this sheep he carries it upon his shoulders, or as the Text tells you, *he carries his lambs in his Armes, and gathers them in his bosome.* Mark this, and let it sink into your hearts: never did any man upon earth go to heaven any other way but upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ: never was sheep saved, but only by being embraced in the Arms of this blessed Shepherd.

Fourth-

Fourthly, obſerve the Shepherd rejoyceth when he hath found the ſheep, he rejoyceth to find this one loſt ſheep; obſerve this for thy comfort thou that art a poor wandring ſheep, diſcouraged from coming to Jeſus Chriſt; obſerve the Lord Jeſus Chriſt will be more glad in receiving and entertaining thee, then thou canſt be in receiving him. You ſee he rejoyceth that he hath found this one loſt ſheep. Oh therefore be exhorted in Gods fear, to ſtand out no longer, but you that have not yet cloſed with Jeſus Chriſt, come to this Shepherd, that whatſoever your diſeaſes and maladies may be, they may be all removed, and your ſouls ſaved. But may be you will ſay, how ſhall we do to come to this Shepherd, that ſo we may be ſaved by him. I anſwer briefly; That man that would come to Chriſt, he muſt reſolve:

Firſt, That he will flye out of himſelf, and renounce all ſelf-confidence, and ſelf-excellency, and ſelf-righteouſneſs: he that would come to Chriſt, he muſt come poor, come in the ſenſe of his own poverty, come like a poor diſtreſſed ſheep, without a Shepherd; he muſt come in the ſenſe and feeling of his own wants and weakneſs: *The Son of man came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt* *Matth.* 18. 11. *Luke* 19. 10. Loſt? we are loſt by nature; therefore Chriſt came to ſave all; no, that is not the meaning; but he came to ſave thoſe that feel themſelves loſt: thou muſt be ſenſible of thine own ſpiritual want; thou muſt be ſpiritually poor, or poor in ſpirit.

Secondly, learn to ſee ſo much beauty and excellency in him, that thou canſt be content to part with any thing for him, any thing that ſtands in com-

competition with him, or oppoſition againſt him, let all go, and ſay, I would have Jeſus Chriſt whatever I part with for his ſake.

Again, be ſure you hearken to the voyce of Chriſt, if thou wouldſt have him for thy Shepherd, *John* 10. 4, 5. *And when he putteth forth his own ſheep, he goeth before them, and his own ſheep follow him, for they know his voyce, and a ſtranger they will not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voyce of ſtrangers.* If thou art a ſheep of Jeſus Chriſt, thou wilt learn the voyce of Chriſt, and not be ſeduced and led away with the error of the wicked, to fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs. When *Theodoſius* the Emperour deſired to have ſome conference with *Arius* the Heretick, the Empreſs perſwaded him not to talk and conferre with ſuch a Heretick that was ſo envious; for, ſays ſhe, by hearing of him, you may be perverted by his words, and ſo inſnared in his curſed opinion. This was excellent counſel.

Laſtly, you muſt come to Chriſt in a way of obedience, you muſt take up a reſolution to obey this bleſſed Shepherd. The ſame Hebrew word רעה that ſignifies to feed, ſignifies to rule; if Chriſt feed thee in his Paſtures he muſt rule thee. *Unite my heart to thee, that I may fear thy name, Pſal.* 86. 11. But what would you have me do? come with a full purpoſe to cleave to this Shepherd, and never to leave him. Do as the Diſciples of Chriſt, in *John* 6. 67, 68. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto the Twelve, will ye alſo go away. Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we goe, thou haſt the words of eternal life.* Oh that we had ſuch a reſolution as *Peter* had, not only to ſay ſo, but to do ſo, *Mat.* 26.

26. 33. *Though all men ſhall be offended becauſe of thee, yet will I never be offended:* Maſter, though all forſake thee, yet will we believe in thy name. Thus if you follow this Shepherd, hear, and obey him, then all the ſweetneſs and marrow of this Doctrine belongs to you, The Lord write theſe things upon our hearts, and draw us nearer and nearer to him, that we may ſay he feeds us, and cloaths us, and gives us eternal life. So much for the firſt point of Doctrine drawn from the firſt part of that Chriſts Relation to his People.

Chriſts

Christs Provision for Mans Direction.

A Sermon Preach'd *Septemb.* 3. 1654.

Text, Isaiah 40. 11.

He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, He shall gather the Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

2 Doct. *Jesus Christ in his carriage to his People hath a tender respect to their infirmityes.* For the proof of this Point, I shall give you but one place of Scripture, and it is so full, that I shall need no more. *Ezek.* 34. 19. It is spoken of our Blessed Saviour, says our Saviour, *I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.* There are four sorts of Persons mentioned there, that have a great deal of need of Christs care and compassion, and of his tender indulgence towards them.

First, Some there are that are *lost Sheep*, not finally,

finally, or totally loſt, but loſt in their own apprehenſion, in their own ſenſe and feeling, as *David* complains in the *Pſalm* 119. 176. *I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep.* Now theſe, our Bleſſed Saviour will ſeek, he will recover them by his Word, and Spirit, though in their own apprehenſions they think themſelves loſt, dead, damned, and undone; yet notwithſtanding he will ſeek them, and bring them into his Fold again.

Secondly, Others there are that are *driven away*, and that is a further degree of Miſery; Satan hath not only gotten them out of the Fold, but when they are got out, they wander more and more, they are driven more and more from Jeſus Chriſt, by Satans ſubtilty, and his temptations. Now ſays our Saviour, thoſe which are driven away, I will bring them back again.

Thirdly, Some are in a further degree of Miſery, they are broken, broken with diſcouragements, they are ready to ſay, there is no hope, no mercy belongs to ſuch ſinners as they are, and theſe are in a worſe condition then the former; for a ſheep may be loſt, and driven from the Fold, but if that be all, he may return; but if the ſheep have a broken Leg, though he hear the voyce of the Shepherd, he cannot help himſelf, his Leg is broken, and he cannot come at the call of the Shepherd: So ſome are ſo broken with diſcouragements, that though they hear the voyce of Chriſt, they are ready to ſay, No mercy belongs to us. Now ſays Chriſt, theſe will I bind up again, and reſtore that Comfort that will quiet their hearts, and ſpeak peace to them.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Others are sick, and that is yet a further degree of misery; when a poor sheep doth not only wander, and is driven away, and hath a broken leg, discouraged with temptations, but hath some kind of sickness of Spirit seized on him, so that he saith, his soul abhors all manner of meat, as *David* describes a man in such a condition, says he, *his soul abhors all manner of meat, and they are brought to the very gates of death.* Psal. 107. 18. This is the sadest condition of all; but says Christ, these are such that I will strengthen. If you would know the reason why Christ hath such a tender respect to his Peoples infirmityes, I will give you these Three.

The First is drawn from that gracious Disposition that is in him: He is a Saviour of a very meek, milde, tender, and compassionate heart; this appears by those Names and Titles that sets forth the sweetness of our Saviours disposition: in Scripture, he compares himself to a Father, to a Physitian, to a Husband.

To a Father, *Heb.* 2. 13. it is the speech of Christ, *Behold, I, and the Children which God hath given me.*

And again, he compares himself to a Physitian, *Math.* 9. 12. *But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole, need not a Physitian, but they that be sick.*

So likewise to a Husband, *Isaiah* 54. 5. *For thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.*

Now, of whom should Children expect pity and compassion, but of their Father; *as a Father pitieth his own Children, so is the Lord merciful to them*

them that fear him. Pſal. 103. 13. And of whom ſhould a Patient expect help, but of his Phyſitian? And of whom ſhould a Wife expect pity, but of her Husband? who knows how to give the wife the honour of a milde Uſage, becauſe he knows ſhe is the weaker Veſſel. All theſe Relations of a Father, a Phyſitian, and a Husband, of a Shepherd, they are moſt eminently in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. That is one reaſon.

Secondly, He hath a tender reſpect to our infirmityes, beceauſe he is a Merciful High Prieſt, toucht with the ſenſe of our infirmityes, *Heb.* 4. 15. *For we have not a high Prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmityes, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin.* Heb. 2. 18. *For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* As God ſpeaks to the Jews, *Exod.* 23. 9. *Alſo thou ſhalt not oppreſs a ſtranger, for ye know the heart of a ſtranger, ſeeing ye were ſtrangers in the Land of Egypt.* So the Lord Chriſt, he knows the hearts of poor, tempted, broken, bruiſed ſouls, becauſe he himſelf was tempted. A Father you know, becauſe he is acquainted with the diſtempers of his Child more then a ſtranger is, pityes his Child, more then a ſtranger doth: So the Lord Chriſt he knows our frame, he conſiders our temper, *Pſal.* 103. 13,24. therefore he pityes us more then ſtrangers do, that do not know our tempers; *he conſiders we are but duſt, and as the wind that paſſeth away, therefore he ſuffers not his whole diſpleaſure to fall upon us,* Pſal. 78. 38, 39. That's the ſecond reaſon: he pityes us, and hath a tender reſpect to our infirmityes, becauſe he

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is a mercifull High Prieſt, toucht with the ſenſe of our infirmities.

Thirdly, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath a tender reſpect to the infirmities of his people, becauſe he loves and likes, and means to cheriſh the beginings of grace in any one of his poor children: he loves grace and he likes it, and cheriſheth it: he looks more at the good in us, which he means to cheriſh, then at the bad in us, which he means to aboliſh: the Lord Chriſt looks at the very buddings and bloſomes of grace in the ſoul; thoſe beginnings of grace are precious unto him: therefore he ſays of a little grace, as a man ſayes of tree that has but one cluſter upon it, do not cut the tree, it hath a bleſſing in it, *Iſaiah* 65 8. The Lord Chriſt will not deſtroy a cluſter of grapes, if there be but one cluſter. If there be but one Cherry on a tree, it ſhews there is ſome life in the tree; one Cherry upon a tree, it ſhews there is life as well as if there was twenty pounds upon it; one Cherry ſhews that it is a living tree, and a man will not cut down that tree. The Lord Chriſt will cheriſh the leaſt beginnings of grace; if there be but a ſpark of grace in the ſoul, he will not quench it, but blow it up into flame. Look as Phyſitians deal with diſeaſed Patients, they do not adminiſter purging Potions according to the greatneſs of their diſtempers, but according to the ſtrength of their Patients: So the Lord Jeſus Chriſt deals with his own children, not according to the diſeaſes and diſtempers that are in them, not according to the diſtempers of their ſins, but according to the meaſure of their ſtrength; he will not lay on them more then he will give them ſtrength to bare. Theſe are the reaſons of the point.

Before

Before I come to the Application of the point, Becauſe this is Childrens bread, and Dogs are ready to ſnatch at it, that yet have no right to it; therefore for the explication of the point, there are theſe three Quæries that would be ſatisfied: Firſt, what an Infirmity is. Secondly what are the cauſes of thoſe Infirmities. Thirdly, what are the ſignes and ſymtomes of thoſe Infirmities.

Firſt, what an Infirmity is. An Infirmity (briefly) in the ſoul is this; *Some ſickneſs or indiſpoſition of the ſoul, that ariſes from the weakneſs of grace*; Or an Infirmity is this, when the purpoſe and inclination of the heart is upright, but a man wants ſtrength to perform that purpoſe; when the ſpirit is willing, but the fleſh is weak, *Matth.* 26. 41. when a man can ſay with the Apoſtle, *To will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not*, *Rom.* 7. 18. When the bent and inclination of the ſoul is right; but either through ſome violence of corruption, or ſtrength of temptation, a man is diverted and turned out of the way: As the needle in the Seamans Compaſs, you know if it be right, it will ſtand always Northward, the bent of it will be towards the North Pole, but being jogged and troubled, it may ſometimes be put out of frame and order, yet the bent and inclination of it is ſtill Northward. This is an infirmity. Thats the firſt.

Secondly, what are the cauſes of theſe Infirmities; there are divers cauſes you muſt know of our infirmities, as

Firſt, an infirmity may ariſe from want of age, for want of time to gather ſtrength. The Lord Chriſt you muſt know hath Lambs in his Fold as

well as Sheep, and he hath Plants in his Orchard as well as ſtronger Trees, and Babes as well as ſtrong Men. Now ſayes the Apoſtle, *I write to you Babes and little Children, becauſe your ſins are pardoned for his names ſake*, 1 *John* 2.12. Obſerve there, that remiſſion of ſin is beſtowed not only upon young men, that are ſtrong to reſiſt temptations, not only upon aged men, that are well experienced in the ways of grace, but it is beſtowed even upon Babes: *I write unto you little Children, becauſe your ſins are pardoned for his names ſake.*

Secondly, our infirmities may ariſe alſo from a want of the means of grace, either when men want milk, or the ſincere milk of the word, 1. *Pet.* 2. 2. or have but little of it.

Thirdly, Infirmities may ariſe from ſome ſecret corruption that was undiſcovered in our firſt converſion: This may be an occaſion of an infirmity; for that may both weaken the ſoul, and exceedingly diſtemper and diſquiet it.

Fourthly, our infirmities may ariſe from forſaking ſound and ſollid truths, and diſquieting our thoughts with *doubtfull diſputations*, as the Apoſtle calls them, *Rom.* 14.1. when men trouble their heads with trifles, or with matters of leſs moment; and in the mean while neglect the marrow of Religion; even as little Children, that forſake wholſome food, and feed on green apples, and ſo put their body into diſtempers.

Fifthly, our infirmities may ariſe from this, when our affections are too much carried out after the world, and the things of the world: for certain it is, look how much the ſoul is carried out after the world, ſo much the weaker it is: the

ſtronger

ſtronger our love to the world is, the weaker is our love to Jeſus Chriſt, and to grace, and ſpiritual things.

Sixthly, our infirmities may ariſe from the not right ordering of our company; dead company, dead and barren company many times make dead and barren hearts.

Seventhly, our infirmities may ariſe from our loſing our firſt love, remitting of that zeal and intention, and forwardneſs that once we had in the wayes of grace: when we grow looſe and ſlothfull in the ſervices of our God, and do not ſtirre up the grace of God that is in us, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. Exerciſe you know encreaſeth ſtrength, but want of exerciſe many times occaſions weakneſs: When a man prayes coldly, hears the word of God coldly, communicates at the Lords Table coldly: The more coldneſs there is in the performance of the Duties of Religion, the more weakneſs there will be in the ſoul. Theſe are the cauſes of our infirmities.

Thirdly, It may be demanded what are the ſignes and ſymptomes of an Infirmity? (Briefly) I ſhall give you theſe four.

Firſt, where there are infirmities there is ſpirituall life, though there be want of ſpiritual ſtrength; this is a certain ſigne of an infirmity. You know there is a great deal of difference between a dead man & a weak man, a dead man that hath not life, and a weak man that hath life, & wants ſtrength. It cannot be ſaid of any wicked man that he is a weak man, but he is a dead man: neither can it be ſaid that he does any thing weakly, but he does it wickedly. Obſerve what our Saviour ſpeaks of a bruiſed reed, he ſpeaks of it as a thing that yet hath

some life in it: for a reed, though it be so exceeding weak, that it is shaken with every wind, yet by the side of the water it grows, it hath life in it. Make this sure to thy self, that thou hast life in thee, or else the comfort of this Doctrine cannot belong to thee; if so be thou hast life in thee, though thy Grace be weak, yet if thou hast life, it is but an infirmity. But you will say, how may I know I have life in me? I answer, you may know it thus.

First, Thou mayst know it by thy spiritual feeling, thou wilt feel what hurts thee, thou wilt feel sin to be a great burthen, and thou wilt groan under it, and thou wilt bemoan thy self like *Ephraim. Jer.* 31. 18. *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoak; turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God; surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed; yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.*

Secondly, Thou mayst know it by that spiritual strife, and combat, and conflict that is in thee: certainly there will be a conflict in thy soul, because there are two contrary principles there; put water to water, or fire to fire, and there is no conflict; but put water and fire together, and there will be a great conflict: So corruption will not strive with corruption, but where there is Grace and corruption in one soul, there will be a combat and conflict, the *Flesh will lust against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*, Gal. 5. 17.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Thou mayst know thou hast life in thee by thy spiritual crying, thou wilt cry out for deliverance from danger and evil: *oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Thou wilt make this the chief subject of thy suit and supplication to God, from day to day: oh, that once I might be freed from a base whorish, backsliding heart, that continually is departing from God.

Fourthly, If thou hast life, certainly that grace thou hast, though it be but weak, though it be but little, though it be but as a spark, yet it shall prevail against corruption; for wherever the Lord Christ enters into the soul to dwell, there he comes like a conquerour, and he brings forth Judgement unto victory, *Mat.* 12. 20. That is, his Government shall be victorious over all the opposition of sin and Satan: Grace, like oyl will be uppermost, if there be but a spark of Grace in thy heart, it shall not be quenched, but it shall rather increase more and more, and at last shall grow up into a flame, as the fire of the Lord that came upon *Elijahs* offering. 1 *King.* 18, 38. *Consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* Grace is a fire that comes down from Heaven, though there be but a little spark of it at first, yet by little and little, it will lick up all the water of our corruptions, and consume our sins; Grace will grow stronger and stronger, and Corruption weaker and weaker. That is the first symptome of an infirmity, if there be spiritual life in the soul, but if there be not spiritual life, there is no infirmity.

Secondly, the second Signe or Symptome of an infirmity, is this, that may be said to be an infirmity, when some particular action crosses the main intention of the heart; If thine eye be single, if thy heart be upright, if the Byas and bent of thy soul be towards God, then all the obliquity, or all the swervings in thy life, are but lookt upon as infirmityes: For example, a good Archer that is handling his Bow, may be his eye is right, and his aim is right, but through the weakness of his hand, or the distemper of his Bow, he may miss the Mark, that is an infirmity: So here, if thy eye be right towards Gods Commandements, if thy intention be to please God, if the bent and byas of thy soul be God-ward, not sin-ward, then all the rest of the obliquity, or swervings that are in thy actions, are lookt upon but as infirmityes: As a Traveller for example in his journey; if he set his face the right way, and he be enquiring the way, and willing to follow the way; or if, when he goeth out of the way, he check himself, though he may miss of the way through ignorance, or may be seduced by some that told him wrong; yet that may be said to be but an infirmity: So here, when thou canst set thy face towards Heaven, as the children of *Israel* and *Judah* are described, *Jer.* 50. 5. *They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward; saying, Come let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten.* When a man thus sets his face towards Heaven; then his wandrings out of the way, (if they be beside the intention of his purpose and mind) are lookt upon but as infirmities; *David* was out of his way, when in a fury he

he would be avenged on *Nabal* for his churlishneſs, when he ſaid, *God, do ſo to me, and more alſo, if I cut not off Nabal, and every one that belongs to his Family*; yet when *Abigal*, a wiſe woman, comes and tells him, he was out of his way, how glad was he? and ſtops his courſe, and ſaid, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael which ſent thee this day to meet me, and bleſſed be thy advice, and bleſſed be thou which haſt kept me this day from coming to ſhed blood, and from avenging my ſelf with my own hand.* 1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. See the difference between the ſin of *Judas*, and the ſin of *Peter*; *Judas* you know, he ſinned with deliberation, and his inteution was ſtark naught, his intention and purpoſe of betraying his Maſter, was to inrich himſelf; he was a Thief, and nibled mony out of his Maſters Bagg, therefore his intention was naught. But on the contrary, look on *Peter*, when he thrice denyed his Maſter, it was a great ſin too, but it was without his intention or purpoſe, certainly, *Peter* had no intention at all to deny his Maſter, but it fared with him, as a man that is writing, with his Pen in his hand and writing a ſtraight Line, but it may be, ſome body comes aud joggs him on the Elbow, ſo he makes a crooked line againſt his will; Or as a man that is ſhooting at a Mark, but ſome body comes and joggs his Elbow, and makes his Arrow go awry; thus was it with *Peter*: This is the ſecond Signe or Symptome of an infirmity.

Thirdly, That is an Infirmity, when a Mans judgement is kept ſound and upright, that he does not approve of any ſin, when no ſin hath any allowance or approbation in his heart; this was

the fruit of *John Baptist* his Preaching, *Isai.* 40.4. *Every Valley shall be exalted, and every Mountain and Hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:* that is, those that are converted by *John Baptists* preaching, they would not look on crooked things as plain, or plain things as crooked; that is, they would not defend, or justifie themselves in sin, but look upon sin as sin, and duty as duty, and they would not look upon the ways of God as crooked, but straight: they were indeed crooked to them before, because their judgement was not sound, but now they look upon them as straight, and all his ways to be equal ways. A child of God will be sure to commend that duty which yet he cannot practise, and he will be sure to condemn that sin into which yet he often slips and falls, and that because his judgement is right, duty will be duty in his eye, and sin will be sin in his eye, though through infirmity he may fail in the one, and fall into the other.

Fourthly, He that sins through infirmity, will still keep his conjugal love to Jesus Christ; and although some failings in him may work a kind of estrangement between Christ and his soul; yet notwithstanding his heart will still cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ, and this appears thus: Because he will choose no other Husband, he will choose no other Saviour for all this, but he would rejoyce with all his heart, if he might be but reconciled to Jesus Christ; though there hath been some unkindness between Christ and him, *He says, I will return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me then now.* Hosea 2.7. and he is grieved for the

the unevenneſs of his carriage towards ſo ſweet a Husband as he hath been to me. If there be ſuch a diſpoſition in you, to hold faſt your conjugal love to Jeſus Chriſt, and ſtill keep cloſe to him, though there may be ſome unkindneſs, yet thou pitcheſt on no other Husband; certainly, this is but an infirmity. But ſays the poor ſoul, can that be an infirmity, that cleaves to me all my days, that, that I have been vext and perplext with, twenty, thirty years together.

I anſwer, poſsibly there may be ſuch infirmityes cleave to Gods children: As for example, ſome deadneſs in dutyes, dulneſs, and deadneſs in hearing the word, it may be ſlipperyneſs of memory, or forgetfulneſs of the words we have heard, or it may be ſome ſtrong corruption, which is like a thorn in the fleſh, which the Lord Jeſus hath left in thee, to humble thee, and to make thee baſe in thy own eyes, all thy days: But it may be then you will object, and ſay; How then will this ſtand with the Doctrine you delivered even now? you made it a mark, or token of ſpiritual life, that Grace will prevail againſt corruption; that the government of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt would be victorious.

I anſwer, True Grace will be victorious at laſt; but I do not ſay, it will be all at once, but it will be by degrees; and it is ſome kind of victory and conqueſt over corruption, when it is ſubdued, though it be not quite extinguiſhed, if it be weakned and abated, though it be not deſtroyed; when a man can feelingly cry out of it, as the Apoſtle did, *Oh wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?* and he breaks

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out, and says, *thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ.* Rom. 7.25.

Secondly, I answer; God sometimes works by contraryes, God is carrying on the work of Grace in his Children, when corruptions seem to be thriving, and growing, when God means to give his Children victory, he suffers them to be foyled first; the work of Grace in the heart sometimes goes backwards, that it may go forwards: As the Seed that is sown in the Field, it rots in the ground before it springs and grows: Sometimes you must know, that God will strengthen us by our very slippings; he will have us learn to stand by our very falls, and bruises, he will have us to be strengthned by our weaknesses and infirmityes, he will have us to be deep rooted by our shakings: Our Infirmityes are the keepers of our Graces; it makes us look more carefully to our own standings; it is good therefore to observe the methods and manner of Gods dealing with our souls, and to learn to live by faith; be acting of faith, in the business of our infirmityes; for as I have often told you, the life of faith, is in the use of faith; so much as we use faith, so much we live by it: it is good for a man to live by faith in point of his infirmityes, and to say, when I am foyled I shall have victory, when I fall, I shall arise, when I am weak, I am strong, as the Church said, *Micah* 7.8. *Rejoyce not against me, oh mine enemy, when I fall, I shall arise, when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a Light unto me.* Thus you have the explication of the point, what an Infirmity is, and what are the causes of it, and what are the signes and symptomes of it; For the Use of the point, 1. For *Consolation,*

ſolation, 2. For *Caution*, the 3. For *Exhortation*.

First, For *Conſolation*, becauſe that is the principle uſe of the Text: And oh, that I could ſpeak not only to the ears, but to the heart of any poor doubting, drooping, dejected ſoul: oh, that this Doctrine might be as a box of ointment, to comfort ſuch an one, to refreſh him; oh, that I could but drop in ſome Conſolation into any poor bruiſed ſoul that hears me this day, that ſuch an one might lift up thoſe hands that hang down, and feeble knees that tremble. *Iſai.* 35. 3.

And this is the comfort I have to tender to thee; that the Lord will not reject thee for an infirmity; He carrys his Lambs in his Arms, and gathers them in his bolom; poor weak ones, he carrys them in his boſom, when it may be the Leg is broken, and they are not able to go; he gently leads thoſe with young, in all their fears, doubts, and diſquietments about their Condition; he hath a tender care of his Lambs, of his weak ones: If thou art but one of Chriſts Lambs, know thus much for thy comfort, that he hath a care of the pooreſt Lamb that is in his Flock; if thou art a Plant in his Vineyard, know, that he hath a care of the tendereſt Plant; never was it known, that a merciful, and compaſsionate Father, caſt off a child becauſe of his weakneſs: many times, it may be, when the child is ſo ſick and weak, that it is not able to ſpeak, but only to ſay Father; it may be it cannot ſpeak out, then the Bowels of the Father yearns towards him the more; the weaker the child is, and unable to ſpeak, the more his compaſsions are rowling towards him; oh, let not our unbelief make Jeſus Chriſt unnatural;

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Do we think that Jesus Christ has less compassion toward his lambs then *Jacob* had. *Jacob* was such a Shepherd that he had such a tender care of his lambs, that says he, if you over drive the flocks, the lambs will die: and do you think that Jesus Christ is less sollicitous for the good of his. But alas! sayes the poor soul, my infirmities discourage me, they weaken my assurance, and rob me of my peace and comfort. I answer; true it is, infirmities do so, but they should not do so; and that they may not do so take these 3. or 4. Considerations.

First, Consider in every infirmity, as there is something against God, so there is something also from God: there is something against God, that is true, because our infirmities are not suitable to the holiness and strictness of his Law; and therefore we should strive against them with prayer, and care and watchfulness. But as there is something against God, so there is something also from God: It may be he lets loose those infirmities upon thee, even like a Messenger of *Satan* to buffet thee, to humble thee, to prove thee, and to teach thee to press Jesus Christ so much the more. It may be God lets loose these infirmities, as the avenger of blood was let loose upon the man-slayer, to force the man-slayer to fly to the City of Refuge, *Numb.* 35. so these infirmities are let loose to force thee to fly to Jesus Christ the Refuge of thy soul. Some there are, that was it not for strong infirmities cleaving to them, strong temptations meeting with them, would never be beholding to Jesus Christ at all: Look therefore in every infirmity; not only at the evil of it, but at the good God intends by it; it may

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be God intends good to thy ſoul by them: whereas we, as he ſaid once, many times make plaiſters to become a poyſon, the Lord is able on the contrary to make a plaiſter of poyſon: We many times bring ſin out of grace, God can bring grace out of ſin, he can bring heaven out of hell: therefore as there is ſomething againſt God, ſo there is ſomething from God in our infirmities, therefore we ſhould not be diſcouraged becauſe of them.

Secondly, Conſider the great difference between thy ſelf when thou waſt in a ſtate of nature, now when thou art a weak Chriſtian, and ſubject to infirmities; did not God reject thee at that time, and caſt thee off, when thou waſt an open Traitor and Rebel, marching on in a courſe of rebellion againſt him? did he not caſt thee off, but had compaſſion on thee, and pity thee, and ſpare thee? then certainly he will not now caſt thee off for ſome unvoluntary error, which thou bewaileſt, and mourneſt for in his preſence: Did the Lord ſeek thee at that time when thou diſpiſedſt him, certainly then, he will not diſpiſe thee when thou ſeekeſt him. That is a good argument of the Apoſtle, to ſtrengthen, and ſupport, and comfort drooping ſpirits, 5 *Rom.* 10. *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life:* Certainly therefore God will not reject thee for an infirmity, if he was ſo gratious to thee in thy ſtate of ſin and enmity to him: there is as great a difference between a ſtate of grace and a ſtate of nature, as there is between heaven and hell, though grace be never ſo weak and imperfect.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Consider the great danger of being pluckt away from Jesus Christ, by giving too much way to despondency: Satans main drift, and great plot is, to drive thee away from Jesus Christ by thy infirmities; he labours to bring thee to despond and dispair, and to say there is no hope for thee; because Satan knows the more he draws thee from Jesus Christ, the weaker thou wilt be: Thy infirmities should not drive thee from Christ, but they should drive thee to Christ, to improve and make use of his gracious disposition, in helping and healing thee in thy miseries and distresses.

Fourthly, Consider what may be the causes of thy infirmities; those infirmities will be cured in the causes. For example, if thy infirmities arise from want of age, or time to gather strength, that will be cured, because *the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. Or if from want of the means of grace, or because the means of grace thou enjoyest are not such as others enjoy; the Lord in such cases will have a tender respect to thee, and measure to thee, not according to what thou hast, but according to what thou wouldst have. Again, if thy infirmities arise from some corruption, that was not discovered to thee at thy first conversion, thou must then pray, and beg, that the Lord would discover thy self to thy self more and more. Again, if thou hast forsaken some old truths of God, and art grown weary of them, and hankerest after Novelties, and new Opinions; then return from thy wandrings, and prize sollid meat above kikshaws, beg that thy soul may taste once again the sweetness of Gospel truths. In a word, what ever the cause

cause of your infirmities be, get the disease healed in the cause, get thy heart more weaned from the world, and stir up thy self to take hold of God, remember thy former zeal, and repent and do thy first works; and this is the way to get thy infirmities healed. Thats the first Use, a Use of comfort and consolation.

The second Use, is a Use of Caution, The Lord Jesus Christ, as you have heard, hath a tender respect to his people, a tender care of his people, in respect of their infirmitys: let not wicked man then apply this to himself, and say, the Lord Christ will have a tender respect to me that go on in the course of sin, that live in sin, & lye in sin, and sleep in sin, and wallow in sin; no, for there is a great deal of difference between the weakness of a Lamb, and the wickedness of a Wolf; the Lord Jesus Christ pities his Lambs for their weakness, but he doth not pity a Wolf for his wickedness; that is, that man who is resolved to go on in a course of sin, say a Minister what he can to the contrary, if he is dead in trespasses and sins, if he hath no spiritual life in him, if there be no work of grace begun in him, all that I have said concerning Christs tender care of his peoples infirmities, doth not belong to him, he hath no part in this Inheritance; if thou beest a Wolfe, and not a Lamb, the Lord Christ that hath a tender care of his Lambs, will be sure to meet thee not as a Shepherd, that carryes his Lambs in his Armes, but he will meet thee as a Lyon, *Hosea* 13. 7, 8. *Therefore I will be unto them as a Lyon, as a Leopard by the way will I observe them, I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her Whelps, and I will rent the caul of their heart, and there will*

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I devour them like a Lyon, the wild beasts shall tear them. The same Christ that is a Shepherd to his People, he knows how to be a Lyon, a Leopard, & a Bear to his Enemies. That is an awakening Scripture, *Psal.* 68. 21. *But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.* If therefore thou art one that goest on in thy trespasses, in an unreformed course; if thou livest in sin, and settest thy heart on wickedness, and takest pleasure therein, this doctrine doth not belong to thee, thou art not a Lamb in Christs account, he will not deal tenderly with thee; nay, he will deal most roughly with thee, his wrath and fury will be powred out upon thee, as the Prophet speaks. Thats the second Use of caution.

Lastly, a word of *Exhortation*; If the Lord Jesus Christ hath such a tender respect in his carriage to the infirmityes of his People; oh, then resolve to have no other Master but the Lord Jesus Christ, be under the conduct of no other Shepherd, but only this; oh, hear him, fear him, and follow him, follow him whethersoever he goes, follow him, how? by depending on him for direction, by cleaving to him in heart, and life, follow him by imitation; follow him by harkning to his voyce; follow him by being ruled by him, as before you are directed, seeing he is the Lord over his own House, let him Rule in his House, let thy soul be his Temple, wherein he may delight to dwell; say, Lord Rule in me as thou pleasest so I may but be thine. Happy are they that are under the Government of Jesus Christ; happy are they that submit themselves to

his

his Guidance and Direction, to his Law, and his Spirit; certainly, ſuch ſhall find him a merciful, a meek, a compaſsionate, a tender-hearted Saviour, who *gathers his Lambs in his Arms, and carries them in his Boſom, and gently leads thoſe that are with young.*

Walking in Chriſt the Mark of our Receiving of Chriſt.

Text, Coloſ. 2. 6.

As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.

THE holy Apoſtle having inſtructed theſe *Coloſſians* in the Doctrine of Chriſt in the foregoing Chapter, armes them againſt Seducers, and falſe Teachers, that would have corrupted that Doctrine, in this ſecond Chapter: It is not enough for Miniſters to give wholſome food unto their people, but they muſt alſo give them Antidotes againſt the poyſon of corrupt Doctrines: It is not enough for Miniſters to feed their people, but they muſt alſo fence their people againſt Wolves that would devour the flock. Thus does the holy Apoſtle here, he forewarnes theſe *Coloſſians*, and ſo forearmes them a-

gainſt thoſe Seducers that would beguile them, with Philoſophy, with legal Ceremonies, and worſhiping of Angels, and other ſuch corrupt Doctrines, mentioned here in this ſecond Chapter. To that end he lays down this weighty rule for them to obſerve, *As ye have therefore received the Lord Chriſt, ſo alſo walke ye in him.*

In the Text you may take notice of two things; Firſt you have here a holy rule preſcribed in theſe words, *As you have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*: Secondly, a practice anſwering that rule here enjoyned; *So alſo walke ye in him.*

As he have. The words will admit of a twofold interpretation: Either take the ſenſe thus; as you have received the Doctrine of Chriſt by *Epephras*, who was a faithfull Miniſter of Chriſt, *Chap.* 1.7. ſo do you perſevere in that Doctrine, and live according to it: this is the uſual interpretation given of the words. Or elſe they may be taken in this ſenſe, as you have received the Lord Chriſt, that is, as you have received him into your hearts by faith, who is the way to eternal life, ſo walk ye in him: And as you have received grace from Chriſt, ſo accordingly act that grace that you have received: this is the Interpretation that ſome give; I ſhall ſtick rather to this latter interpretation in the handling of this Text. Many Doctrines may be gathered from this verſe, but becauſe my purpoſe is to diſpatch it in one Sermon, as looking upon it as a ſeaſonable Text, a ſuitable Subject for a day wherein we have been partakers of the precious Ordinance of the Lords Supper. I will name but two or three Doctrines, and pitch upon the principall.

Firſt,

First, *As you have received Christ Jesus.*

Observe, where the Gospel is rightly observed, Jesus Christ is also received with it. Mark, the Apostle does not say, as you have received the Doctrine of Christ, but Christ himself; he that rightly receives the Doctrine of Christ, receives Christ himself. Oh then! in how high reverence and esteem should we have the Gospel? and what a prodigious sin are they guilty of that tread the precious Gospel under foot? what a dreadfull account have they to give? 2 *Thes.* 1. 7, 8. *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Secondly, *As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord..*

Mark, it is not enough to receive Jesus Christ as a Saviour, but he must be received as a Lord, as a Ruler also; according to the tenour of my last Text, *Acts* 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*: Jesus Christ will be Saviour to none but those to whom he is a Prince. Bishop *Davenant* in his Commentary upon the *Colossians* sayes, the false Apostles preacht Christ, and their Disciples likewise received Christ; but neither did the false Apostles preach him, nor their Disciples receive him as Lord; but they received him as a fellow Servant with *Moses*: therefore says the Apostle, if you receive Christ rightly, you must receive him as a Lord.

Thirdly, here I might observe, *Walk ye in him,*

That Christ is the way, the living way, the only way wherein we should walk.

The fourth and last Doctrine is that which will comprise the marrow of the Text, and it is this; *That it is not enough for a Christian to receive Christ, but he must also walk in Christ.*

That you may understand the Doctrine aright, let me open the terms to you. There is a twofold receiving of Christ, an habituall and a graduall receiving of him.

First, there is an habitual receiving of Christ; of this speaks the Apostle, 1 *John* 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.*

But then secondly, there is a gradual receiving of him, and of this speaks the Apostle in this Chapter, *Colos.* 2. 19. *And not holding the head, from which all the body by joynts and bands having nourishment ministred and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* The whole body, that is the Church of God, and every Member being knit to the head, that is to Jesus Christ, having nourishment supplyed from the head: so the Members of Christ being supplied with nourishment from God, increase with the increase of God. Observe, there is never a Member of Christ but is a growing Member: there is a gradual receiving of Christ, a receiving him more and more, by degrees, as well as an habitual receiving of him. If you ask me what is the difference between these two receivings of Christ, the habitual and gradual: I answer, the difference lies in two things.

First, the habitual receiving of Christ is done but once, the gradual is done often. The habitual receiving

receiving of Christ is done but once, as the Child is born into the world but once, but it must be nourished and fed every day: so we are spiritually born, or regenerated but once; but we must be nourished, and we must likewise increase and grow in and up to Christ daily; we must grow up to him, as the Apostle phrases it, grow up into him more and more, *Eph.* 4. 15.

Secondly, In the habitual receiving of Christ, we are meerly passive, a man does no more to his own regeneration then a dead man can do to his own resurrection. But in the gradual receiving of Christ we are active, we are *co-workers with God*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. as the Apostle speaks, we move towards him when we are moved by him. The child before it is born hath no nourishment but what it receives from the Mother; but when the child is born, then it hath a nutritive faculty, and is able to feed and nourish it self. So in the first work of conversion we are meerly passive, and do nothing at all, but receive all from Christ, and do nothing in the carrying on the work of our salvation: But when once we have received a life from Christ, then we may act and exercise that life for our own good, and the glory of God. Now of both these receiving of Jesus Christ does the Apostle speak, both of the habitual and gradual receiving of him: *As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.* Walking is an active motion, and when the Apostle sayes, walk in him, it is as if he should say, as you have received the truth of grace, so also be acting of your grace to the glory of Christ. So then, this is the meaning of the Doctrine, when I say it is not enough for a Christian

to receive Christ, but he must also walk in Christ: the meaning of the Doctrine is this, it is not enough for a Christian to receive grace from Christ, but he must be also acting his grace. For the proof of this truth, let me give you two remarkable Scriptures, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee.* I know the Apostle speaks of the Ministerial gift, but it is as true of the work of grace; for the Greek word χάρισμα signifies grace as well as gift; *Stir up the grace of God in thee.* Mark the phrase, it is a remarkable phrase; for in the original it is to blow up thy grace Αναζωπυρεῖν just as a man blows up a fire that grows dull, or is hid under the ashes, blow up the grace of God in thee. The other Scripture which is parallel to this, in that Text, *Gal.* 5. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*; that is, if we have received a spiritual life, or influence upon Christ, let us walk in the spirit, that is, let us act that spiritual life that we have received by the operation of grace: If we have received the life of grace, let us also act the life of grace. For the better explication of this point, two things are to be briefly unfolded.

First, what is required of a Christian, that he may act his grace, that he may walk in Christ.

Secondly, why must a Christian that hath received grace be acting his grace.

First, what is required of a Christian, that he may be acting of his grace. In answer to this, I shall lay down these five propositions.

First, no man can act that grace he hath received by his own strength, without the help and assistance

ſiſtance of Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. but *by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was beſtowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly then they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*: He does not ſay the grace of God which was in me, that habitual grace which I had; but the grace of God which was with me. So then, it is not the ſtrength of habituall grace that carries a man through any duty, but the auxiliary, the aſſiſting, the concurring grace of Jeſus Chriſt; it is his grace with us more then his grace in us: And ſays our Saviour, ſpeaking to his Diſciples, *without me ye can do nothing*, John 15. 5. ye that are my Diſciples, ye that have the ſpirit of grace, without me ye can do nothing. The habit of grace, the acting of grace, and the perfecting of grace, are all from Jeſus Chriſt: If we cannot put forth a natural action without him, for *in him we live, move, and have our being*, *Acts* 17. 28. how much more can we performe a ſpiritual act in a ſpiritual manner without him, *Phil.* 2. 13. ſays the Apoſtle, *for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure*. Yet take this caution with you, when I ſay, a man cannot act his own grace, by his own ſtrength; you muſt not therefore be lazy, and ſay, I can do nothing without Chriſt; for you muſt know the Lord Chriſt works grace in us, by ſetting thoſe faculties that are in us on work, though we cannot work by our own ſtrength, yet we muſt be co-workers with Chriſt, ſays the Apoſtle; *Work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 12, 13.

That which ſome perſons make an argument of lazineſs, we will do nothing ſay they in the buſineſs of Salvation, for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do: The Apoſtle makes it rather an argument of diligence; nay therefore be you working as well as God, though it is God that works in you, both to will and to do, yet do you work out your ſalvation; if you put forth your ſtrength to the utmoſt, he will help you: Thats the firſt Propoſition.

Secondly, Another Propoſition is this, It is not enough to act one grace, but Chriſtians muſt be acting every grace; for all graces proceed from the ſame fountain: *We receive from Chriſts fulneſs, and grace for grace*, John 1. 16. Jeſus Chriſt is the fountain of all grace, *Coloſ.* 1. 19. *It pleaſeth the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* We muſt draw water from no other Fountain, you muſt not look on faith as a diſtinct habit, or love, or repentance, as a diſtinct habit, as if theſe were ſeverall branches, proceeding from ſeveral roots, they all proceed from one and the ſame root; Faith is a habit of grace receiving Chriſt, Love is a habit of grace cloſing with Chriſt, Repentance is a habit of grace renewing and fitting the ſoul to receive Chriſt; they all proceed therefore from one and the ſame root, and every grace muſt be acted.

Thirdly, The third Propoſition is this; It is not enough to act grace one way, but Chriſtians muſt act grace every way; we muſt not only act grace inviſibly, and inwardly, in reference to God; but we muſt act grace outwardly, and viſibly, in reference to men. This is that our Saviour ſpeaks of, *Let your light ſo ſhine before men*; he ſpeaks of the

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light of grace *Mat.* 5.16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven*: and says the Apostle, *James* 2.18. *Shew me thy faith by thy works.*

Fourthly, There are certain seasons wherein grace must be especially acted, as there are certain seasons of the year; in Spring you have buds and blossoms, in Sommer you have fruits green, and growing, in the Autumn you have the same fruits ripe, and ready to be eaten; *every thing is beautifull in its season*, Eccles. 3.11. *He hath made every thing beautifull in his time*; so every grace is beautifully acted when it is seasonably acted.

Fifthly, he that hath the least measure of grace, must not be discouraged, but must be acting it still, that in the exercise of it, it may be increased; nay certainly a man that hath but one Talent, *Mat.*25. 15. that is, but a little measure of grace, and doth act it well, he shall have more comfort a great deal, then he that hath five Talents, and doth not wisely act them. Thus you see the first thing opened, what is required of a Christian that he may rightly act his grace.

The second thing for explication is; but why must Christians thus be acting of their graces: Let me give you these 4 reasons.

First, the acting of grace will be a certain evidence of the truth of grace: there is no more certain evidence of the truth of grace, then the acting of grace: it may be there are some poor souls that hear me, that will be ready to say, O what would I give, that I might but have a certain and infallible evidence of the truth of grace, though it were

were but as a grain of Mustard-seed; that I could but say, that I have true faith, and true repentance, and true love to Jesus Christ, had I an assurance that it were in truth, what would I give; I will tell thee for thy comfort, here is a rule in the Text, if thou walk in Jesus Christ, that is, if thou be acting that little grace thou hast received, it is a certain token of the truth of it. A painted fire will not warm a man, a painted Cow will give no milk, a painted Horse will not move, a painted Tree will not grow; so here, a painted Christian, a counterfeit Christian, a Hypocrite, counterfeit grace will never grow, a counterfeit Christian is alway a dead and barren Christian; but if thou art a fruitfull Christian, it is a token that grace that thou hast, is grace in truth, as the Apostle speaks, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 6, 7, 8. *And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, & to brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shal neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*: when a man is acting of his grace, he is adding to his grace: add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, *&c.* When a man is acting his grace, then he is not barren, nor unfruitfull; when these two go together, then may a man be confident that he is a real Christian, a Disciple indeed, and not a Disciple in name only. There are these two special properties of grace, the acting of grace and the growth of grace; and you have them both in that place, 2 *Pet* 1. 5, 6, 7, 8. the activity of grace, when a man

man is not barren nor unfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: And the growth of grace, when a man addes to his faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, &c. Compare these two places of Scripture together, *Galat.* 6.15. with *Galat.* 5.6. In *Galat.* 6.15. sayes the Apostle, *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new Creature:* compare that with *Galat.* 5.6. *For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* In the former place, namely *Galat.* 6.15. *but a new creature:* there the Apostle speaks of the habit of grace; in the latter, namely *Galat.* 5.6. *but faith which worketh by love,* there he speaks of the activity of grace: when the habit of grace is turned into the activity of grace, when faith worketh by love, that is a token of true grace indeed.

A second reason is this, The more you act your graces, the more you shall encrease them, Tradesmen know the more they trade with their Stock, the more they increase their Stock: Geace is like the Widows oyl, the more it is poured out, the more it is increased, 2 *Kings* 4.6. Nay, there is a promise made to that man that doth well use his grace, *Matth.* 25.29. *For, unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance*; which place must be rightly understood, our Saviour speaks there of gifts of the same kind, and same order, otherwise we will run into the *Pelagian* and *Arminian* opinion, which is, that the well using of the gifts of nature, will merit the gifts of grace; so the *Arminians* would have the meaning of the words,

words to be; he that well uſes the gifts of nature, to him ſhall be given the gifts of grace. Our Saviour there ſpeaks no ſuch matter; but he ſpeaks thus, he that hath ſaving grace, ſhall have more ſaving grace: that man that hath ſaving grace, by well uſing of it, ſhall have more ſaving grace: as a man, the more he playes upon an Inſtrument, the more dextrous he grows, the more cunning and skilfull he will be: So here, the more you act your graces, the more a great deal ſhall you increaſe them: *to him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance.*

Thirdly, a third reaſon is this, becauſe God hath given grace for that very end, that it may be acted: If God hath given thee grace, it is not that thou ſhouldeſt hide it like a Candle under a Buſhel, nor for thee to put in a dark Lanthorn; but that thou ſhouldeſt ſet it upon a Table for the advantage and benefit of others: *But the manifeſtation of the ſpirit is given to every man to profit withall,* 1 *Cor.* 12. 17. and in 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. *As every man hath received the gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God.* And why are we ſaid to be Stewards of the manifold grace of God, becauſe we ſhould be diſpenſing them, as Stewards as have their Maſters goods; not to put them in their own purſes, or to convert them to their own advantage; but to be diſpenſing of them, and diffuſing them for their Maſters advantage; we are Stewards of the manifold grace of God: look, as God gives to ſome more riches then to others, becauſe he would have them to be more rich in good works then others: ſo he gives to ſome more grace then he gives to others,

others, becauſe he would have them diffuſive of grace, making others rich in grace. He gives to ſome more comforts then he gives to others, becauſe he would have them *to comfort others with the ſame comforts wherewith they themſelves are comforted of God*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4,5. The grace of God is given for this end to diſpence to others.

Fourthly, A fourth reaſon is this, If you do not act your graces, God ſhall looſe his glory; and his glory ſhould be dearer to you then your liberty, and all your outward comforts. It is a true ſpeech of him that ſaid, the truth of grace doth ſave my ſoul, but the acting of grace makes for the honour of God; the truth of grace makes for my ſafety, but the acting of grace makes for the ſervice of God, in the place I am in. Now a child of God hath the glory of God ly near his heart: ſays a child of God, I would looſe my life rather then the end of my life, I would be uſefully ſpent for God, for the honour of God, for the name of God, in living, in ſuffering, in dying, rather then to enjoy all the honours, or pleaſures, or treaſures that the world can afford. Thus you ſee the point opened and made good to you.

Now for the uſe of it, and there are three uſes I ſhall make of it.

Firſt, by way of Information: If they that have grace muſt be acting, and increaſing of it, then certainly it follows, that they that have no grace, had need to get it: If they that have received Chriſt Jeſus muſt walk in him, then they that have not received him, certainly they have great need, infinite need, to cloſe with him. Oh the miſerable, and doleſull, and for the preſent damnable condition of

all

all those that for the present are in a Christless condition, in a graceless condition! no tongue of men or Angels is able sufficiently to express it; no tears of blood can sufficiently bewail it. If any of you die in such a condition, you must resolve to die everlastingly, and to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude 7.* you must resolve to be satisfying of a sin-revenging God, in hell, and yet never be able to satisfie it; you must be always dying, and yet never dye, *Rev. 6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to dye, and death shall flee from them*: This will be the condition of all those that dye Christless, that dye graceless, that have not received Christ into their hearts, and that have not got grace into their hearts, oyle into their lamps, they shall be alway dying and yet never dye: O with what weeping, and wailing, and wringing of their hands, and tearing of their hair, and renting of the cawl of their hearts, shall they cry out! O that I might dye, and dye, and never have a being more; O that I might dye the most cursed, the most tormenting, the most painfull death that ever creature on earth dyed, so I may but dye: But this is the misery of all misery, I live to dye, and must live eternally. This is the condition of all those that have not got Christ into their hearts: O then! why do you rest in such a condition one week, nay, one day: O if ever there were any love to your souls kindled in your breasts, any desire of salvation wrought in you, any care of escaping those unconceiveable tortures and torments, resolve to receive Jesus Christ upon his own tearms, and say, O Lord, rule in me as thou pleasest, so I may

may be but thine; resolve to receive him as a Prince, as well as a Saviour. It was a point I pressed upon you with all my might, from *Acts* 5. 31. receive Jesus Christ to give her repentance, as well as remission of sins: He is a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins: He gives repentance before he gives remission; if he gives not repentance for sin, he never gives remission of sin: O resolve to trade for him; some of you know no other trade, but to trade in the world, to be tumbling up and down in dirt, and clay, and to provide for your Families: a Heathen may do as much as you do: O that you would be perswaded to drive a Trade for heaven, for grace, for saving grace. That which *Solomon* speaks of wisdome, I may say of every grace, *Prov.* 4. 7. *Wisdom is the principall thing, therefore get wisdome, and with all thy getting, get understanding.* So say I, grace is the principall thing, therefore with all thy getting, get grace: It is no matter, though thou be poor in the world, if thou beest rich in grace: If thou should be rich in the world, and get thy Coffers full of gold and silver, and yet if thou get no grace in thy heart, it had been better that thou hadst never been born.

Secondly, by way of reproof; here is a just and sharp reproof, even of Gods own children, that have received Christ, and yet do not walk in him, do not *walk worthy of him, in all well pleasing*; that have received grace, and yet do not act grace, but rather wrap it up like a Talent in a Napkin: I cannot speak it without indignation, how many Christians are there, some of whom I am really perswaded they are the Servants of Jesus Christ,

yet

yet they are ſick of a ſpiritual Lethargy, Appoplex, they are in a ſpiritual ſlumber; a man in an Appoplex hath his reaſon, he is a reaſonable man, but he cannot make uſe of his reaſon: what is man the better for his wealth, if he does not make uſe of his wealth? ſo what am I the better for grace, if I do not make uſe of it, for the glory of God, and the good of others? In *Matth.* 25. you read, the five wiſe Virgins ſlumbered, as well as the five fooliſh: It is a ſad thing, when even Gods own children, true Profeſſours, ſhall be ſlumbering; yet the five wiſe virgins ſlumbered, as well as the five fooliſh. Yet this is the condition of the Servants of God at this day; I can hardly meet with any but their grace is ſuſpended, they are ſaln aſleep, their activity for God, and their acting of grace is lull'd aſleep. I pray God he do not thunder againſt us, as once the Mariners did to *Jonah*; *What meaneſt thou o ſleeper, ariſe, call upon thy God, if ſo be that God will think upon us, that we periſh not, Jonah* 1. 6. when the wind roars, and the waters rage, and the ſtorms ariſe, and there is but a ſtep between thee and death, and thou aſleep; is it not a ſhame for thee, to be ſnorting when the ſhip is in danger of ſinking; ſo may it be ſaid of all us as are aſleep in ſecurity, I pray God that he do not awake us with a ruſhing wind. It may be the rod may come ſooner on us then we are aware, and a ſharper rod then we are aware of. Oh that I could but awaken my own ſoul, then I might hope to help to awaken you out of this ſpiritual ſlumber; then you would ſay to me as *David* did to *Abigail*, *Bleſſed be God, and bleſſed be thou, that haſt given me this counſel this day*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 32, 33. Bleſſed be God

that

that thou hast awakened me out of my sloth and security.

The third and last use it is for Exhortation. If so be it is not enough for Christians to receive Christ, and to receive grace, but they must be walking in Christ, and they must be acting of their grace; then I beseech you to hearken to the counsel of the Apostle here: I cannot give you the exhortation in better words, then these in the Text, *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Oh be walking in Christ, oh be acting of your grace, oh be stirring up your selves to take hold of God, Oh be stirring up the grace of God that is in you, oh be active Christians, be not sleepy Christians, be not dull, drowsie, dead-hearted in matters of everlasting salvation: You have but little time to spend, and you had need to spend it well; every day brings you nearer your graves, oh that every day might bring you nearer to God; God is continually acting for you; he is an overflowing, and an ever-flowing Fountain of goodness; God is continually renewing his mercy upon you; Jesus Christ is continually interceding for you; the spirit of God is continually knocking at the dore of your hearts: And is God acting for you, and will you act nothing for God?

Secondly consider, wicked men they are continually acting for Satan, continually doing the Devils drudgery: what a shame is it, that wicked men should take more pains to go to hell, then Gods Children should take to go to heaven? *Judas* was as busie as could be that night to betray his Master, plotting and contriving how to betray Christ into the hands of the Jewes, when the rest

of his Disciples were sleeping, *Judas* was waking to do the Devils work. I beseech you, let not wicked men rise up in judgement against you, let not them be more vigorous and active in the work of sin, then you are in the work of grace and holiness.

Thirdly consider, if you be not acting your graces, God may justly leave you to be acting your corruptions; if you be not acting one way, you will be acting another way; if you be not acting grace, be sure the Devill will set you on work, to be grinding of his grist. The mind of man is like a Mill, it is alwayes grinding Chaffe, or weat; if you be not doing Gods work, you will be doing Satans work. On the contrary; see what the Apostle sayes, *Galat.* 5. 16. *This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* Be walking in the spirit, be acting the grace you have received, then you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; though it is true, those lusts of the flesh and cursed corruptions will be stirring in you, yet you will never fulfill the lust of the flesh: It may be you may be drawn to act them, to be sold under sin; as the poor captive is carried into captivity against his mind and will, so you may be held under sin, and carried captive by it; but you will never willingly fulfil the lust of the flesh. But then, may be you will say, what means, or helps, or directions can you prescribe to this end, that we may act grace. Briefly in answer to this, and so I have done.

First, I will shew you in whose strength you must act grace.

Secondly, In what manner you must act grace.

Thirdly, in what seasons you must act grace.

First,

First, in whose strength must you act grace, I told you before, no man can do it in his own strength; therefore you must go out of your selves, and run to the Lord Jesus Christ, *Hosea* 11. 3. *I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their Arme.* God does not only give us spiritual life, but he also gives us strength: He did not only give *Ephraim* life, but he gave him strength; *I taught Ephraim to go, leading them by the Arme.* I remember the speech of *Sampson*, *Judges* 16. 20. when his locks was cut off; the text sayes, *And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake my self, and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him:* I may apply it thus, many times we set about duty in our own strength, and we think to do such and such dutyes, as before, but alas! when the spirit of God is withdrawn, we are as weak as *Sampson* was when his locks were cut off. On the contrary, *Let the King sit but at his table, then our Spicknand sendeth forth the smell thereof*, Cant. 1. 12. that is, let Jesus Christ be but with us, then our graces, which are compared to Spicknard, send forth a sweet smell. If the wind blow upon our Garden, that is the spirit of God working in the soul (*Awake O North wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*, Cant. 4. 16.) then the spices will flow forth. If the Sun shine upon the Mary-gold, how soon does the Mary-gold open: Oh make sure of the presence of Jesus Christ with you, say, Lord let me have thy grace with me, as well as thy grace in me.

Secondly, I will shew you how, or in what manner you must act Grace.

First, You must act your Graces evenly, not by girds and starts; walking we say, is an equal, and even Motion: some there are, that are very forward, that will run for a quarter of a mile, then they sit down, having run themselves out of breath; this is the case of many forward Professors, oh, they seem for a while to be very zealous Godward, and Graceward, but then they faint, and flag, and grow weary of the ways of God. See what the Prophet *David* says, *Psal.* 119. 112. *I have enclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end*, that is a right acting of Grace indeed: A man that resolves to keep Gods statutes, alway to the end, *Teach me O Lord the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end*, in *ver.* 33. of the same Psalm.

Secondly, As you must act Grace evenly, so you must act it orderly, that is, you must not turn aside either to the right hand, or to the left; This is one of Gods own commands, *Deu.* 5. 32. *Ye shall observe to do therefore, as the Lord your God hath commanded you, you shall not turn aside to the right hand, or to the left.*

3. You must act your Grace Evangellically, to do all your Duties, from Christ, by Christ, and to Christ; from Christ as the Root, by Christ as the Rule, and to Christ as the end: Let Christ be the Spring, let him be the Guide, and let him be the Centre of all your actings.

Fourthly, See that you act all your Graces, likewise couragiously, that you may say, nothing shall daunt me, or discourage me in the way that I have undertaken. As *David* in the business of his dancing before the Lord, which was an evidence of his

his exceeding great zeal, when *Michael* ſcoft at him, ſays he, *I will yet be more vile then thus, and be more baſe in my own ſight.* 2 Sam. 6. 27. Laſtly, act Grace humbly, when you have done all that you can do, ſay you are unprofitable ſervants, and ſay with St. *Paul, it was not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* 1 Cor. 15. 10.

Laſtly, I ſhall ſhew you in what ſeaſons you muſt act Grace; certainly Grace muſt be acted at all times, but there are ſome ſpecial ſeaſons, wherein we muſt eſpecially act Grace.

Firſt, Upon the receipt of ſome ſpecial Mercy, then we ſhould act Thankfulneſs more then ordinarily, *and ſay, What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* Pſal. 116. 12. Is Gods hand enlarged in bounty, then let my heart be enlarged with thankfulneſs.

Secondly, When you lye under a ſmarting Rod, a piercing Affliction, then act Faith and Patience: a man uſually never acts Grace better, then when he is under ſome abaſement; a ſoul can better mannage a ſtate of adverſity, then it can a ſtate of proſperity; for when it is in a ſtate of abaſement, then it is at a leſs diſtance from God; as Roſes, they are never ſo ſweet, as when they are in a Still, and fire is under them; never does our Graces uſually ſend forth a ſweeter ſavour, then when God is pleaſed to exerciſe us with Afflictions: *David* was never better then when he was under the Rod, then he made thoſe heavenly ſoul-raviſhing Pſalms, that you meet with in the book of Pſalms; The beſt Pſalms, the moſt heavenly and ſpiritual Pſalms were made when *David* was in a low condition; witneſs the 34 Pſalm, its one

of the sweetest Psalms you meet with; when was it made? when *David* was in the lowest condition that ever he was in; when he was in that straight, he was forced to feign himself mad, 1 *Sam*, 21. 13. See how *David's* heart was enlarged in the making of this Psalm.

Thirdly, Another fit season to act Grace in, is, when you receive the seals of the Covenant of Grace in the use of the holy Ordinance of the Lords Supper, that is a time for you to act Grace in; then should you be acting brokenness of heart; for, can you look upon a broken Saviour without a broken heart, upon a bleeding Saviour without a bleeding heart? then should you be acting Humility, and say as *Mephibosheth*; *What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am*, 2 Sam. 9. 8. Nay, but here is more, that thou shouldest not only look on me, but set me at thy Table; what, a beggar, a loathsom leprous beggar, to sit at the Table of the King of Glory?

Then act love to Jesus Christ: what, hath he loved me so dearly? Oh, how should I love him, above all expressions of love, and be sick of love to him.

Then act faith especially, for that is a grace you have most need of when you come to the Lords Table; as now, faith is the very eye whereby we look upon him; it is the hand whereby we receive him; it is the mouth whereby we feed on him, says Christ, *except you eat my flesh, and drink my blood, you have no life in you*. Joh. 6. 52, 53. He does not here speak of a Corporal eating of him; far be it from us to have such a thought as they of *Capernaum* had; *how can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

eat? that man that beleeves in Christ he feeds on Christ.

Then be acting of Thankfulness, after you have received the Lords supper: Oh, what thanks shall I return to the Lord my God? oh my whole course of life should be nothing but a continual gratulation to my Father, for that never sufficiently admired gift of the Lord Jesus Christ; If I had ten thousand thousand tongues, I could never prayse him sufficiently.

Then act holy Resignation of yonr selves up to Christ; what, did the Lord give himself for me? I will give my self up to him; was he crucified for my sins? I will crucifie my sins for him, study conformity to him, and that will evidence that you have Communion with him: There is no more certain evidence of our Communion with Christ in his Graces, Comforts, Merits, and Spirit, *&c.* then in our conformity to him: when we resemble him in Grace here, it is a certain evidence that we shall resemble him in Glory hereafter. In one word, do but make it your business to be acting your Grace, and you may trust God for the bringing in of your Comforts; the more you are active in Grace, the more shall be your Comfort: If we had more activity of Grace, we should have more evidence of Christs dwel'ing in our hearts here, and God would have more Glory, our souls would have more peace, and we should have abundance of more rejoycing in the day of onr Lord Jesus.

Christs Temptation, the Saints Supportation.

A Sermon Preach'd *Decemb.* 9, 1657.

Text, *Hebr.* 2. 18.

For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

THe scope of the Apostle in the former Chapter is to prove that Jesus Christ is truely God, therefore far above the Angels; for says he in the 5 verse of that Chapter, *Unto which of the Angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* In this Chapter the Apostle proves that Jesus Christ is truly man, and therefore in that respect inferiour to the Angels, verse 9. *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower then the Angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* And because it might be demanded, But why is it needfull that Jesus Christ should be man? why did he not take on him the nature of Angels? but he took on him the seed of *Abraham*, in the 16*th* verse. The Apostle gives us 4 reasons, why our blessed Saviour would be man, why he took our humane nature upon him.

First,

First, he did it for the sanctification of our nature, and that reason is set down in the 11 verse; *for both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one*; that is, they are all of one and the same nature, we come all from one common root; Christ came from the same root that we did, namely from *Adam*, and this he did, that he might sanctifie our nature.

Secondly, The Lord Jesus Christ became man, that he might in our nature, and for our benefit, destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil: that is set down in the 14 verse; *For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devill.*

Thirdly, he became man, that he might deliver us not only from the hurt of death, but deliver us also from the fear of death; and thats set down in the 15. verse; *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage.*

Fourthly, he became man, that by the experience of his sufferings in our nature, he might be *a mercifull and faithfull High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*; and thats set down in the 17 verse. And the ground of this Assertion the Apostle lays down in the words of the Text, which I have now read to you; *For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* So then the Text contains in it a singular benefit and advantage that believers have by Christs temptations, namely a sanctified use of temptations, and a gratious support under temptations.

tations. For the clearing of this you must know, all that ever our Lord and Saviour did here upon earth as Mediatour, was done not for himself alone; but was done for us, and for our good. For example, He took our flesh in the womb of a virgin, that he might sanctifie our nature; He was born of a woman, that he might sanctifie our birth; He suffered in the flesh, that he might sanctifie our sefferings; He was buried in a grave, that he might sweeten and perfume the grave, that he might make the grave as a bed of spices; He rose again from the dead, that he might assure us that we shall be raised by his power, 1 *Cor.* 6. 14. *And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power*: And he was tempted, that he might be able to succour us when we are tempted. Let me first open the words to you, and then draw out the Doctrine I intend to pitch upon. I shall dispatch this Text in one Sermon.

For in that he himself hath suffered. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered indeed; He was a great sufferer; nay the greatest sufferer that you read of in the whole book of God; He suffered in his Circumcision, when he was but eight days old, he condescended to that painfull Ceremony, that painfull Sacrament; He suffered a painfull pilgrimage for three and thirty years together; and although he was heir of all things, all the Kingdoms of the world were his, yet he had not a house to hide his head in; *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head, Matth.* 8. 20. He suffered by Satan when he was led into the Wilderness to be tempted for forty dayes together, which was

a greater abasement to the Son of God, then if the greatest Empress in the world should be solicited in her chastity by the basest Schullion that ever was. Oh how did Satan hurry the body of our dear Lord and Saviour, first to the pinacle of the Temple, then he hurried it to a Mountain, and carried it from one place to another? Oh that the precious body of Jesus Christ should be thus basely used, by a Vassal, by a cursed Fiend, by a cursed creature. So he suffered by Satan.

And he suffered by men, he suffered the contradiction of sinners, he suffered himself to be reviled, scorned, reproached, blasphemed, when they said, *Say we not well thou art a Samaritan and hast a Devill?* John 8.48. And *he is mad, and hath a Devil, why hear ye him?* John 10.20. He suffered on the Cross, a shamefull, painfull, and cursed death; He suffered in his body, but most of all he suffered in his soul, when he said, *My soul is heavy unto death,* is girt about with death, *John* 12.27. *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?* he speaks as if he had been non-plust; My soul is so troubled, says he, that I know not what to say, I know not what to do. So you see the Lord Jesus Christ he suffered. Further, the Text says *he suffered being tempted*: Jesus Christ you know was tempted by Satan, for forty days together, and he was tempted by his Enemyes: the Pharisees they required a signe of him, tempting of him, *Luke* 11.16. Then he was tempted by the *Herodians*, when they came with that captious question, *Shall we give tribute to Caesar, or shall we not?* Mat.22.17, 18. Christ answered them, *Why tempt ye me ye hypocrites?* He was tempted by one of his Disciples,

Peter,

Peter, says he to him, *Master, spare thy self, and do not go up to Jerusalem*, in so much that Christ sharply reproved him, & said to him, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men*, Mat. 16. 22. 23. And he was tempted even by his own dear Father, when his Father hid his face from him, when he seemingly did forsake him, when he cryed out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Math. 27. 46. So you see that our Saviour suffered, and our Saviour was tempted: And why was he tempted, that he might succour them that are tempted, the Text says. Why, may some say, did the sufferings and temptations of Jesus Christ add any thing to his ability to succour his tempted Servants, which he had not before? To this I answer, you must know he had an ability of power, which was irresistable, he had an ability of power as he was God: but the Apostle speaks here, of an ability of compassion, or of an ability of experience, as he was man; as he says in the like case, *Heb.* 5. 8. *He learned obedience by things which he suffered*: How did he learn it? he learnt it experimentally: So here by his sufferings and temptations, he learnt to succour them that are tempted, he learnt compassion by his temptations: How did he learn compasion? he learnt it experimentally; for now he hath learned by experience, to know the kinds of temptations, to know the wounds that temptations make in the soul of a poor sinner, and to know the proper means, and medicines for the curing of temptations: so that if you ask, but why was the Lord Jesus Christ tempted? I answer, he was tempted for these three ends especially. First,

First, That he might teach us this Lesson. If Satan was so bold with him, that was the dear Son of God, he will be much more bold in tempting us poor creatures; If he was so bold with the Master, much more will he be bold with the Servants; If he were so bold with the Captain of our salvation, much more will he be bold with his Souldiers; If he were so bold in tempting him, who was the King of glory, a pure and spotless Saviour, a lamb without spot and blemish, in whose mouth could be found no guile, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. Oh, he will be much more bold with us, that are poor sinfull creatures, that have such impure and defiled natures: *How abominable and filthy is man*; Job 15. 16. When the Devil came to tempt our Lord and Saviour, he found nothing in him, he found no matter to work upon, he found no corruption, one which he might fasten his temptation, *John* 14. 30. *The Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me*, All the temptations of Satan upon our Saviour were but like the jogging of pure and clean water in a Christall glass, where is no mud at all; But now Satan never comes to us, but he finds matter enough, and ground enough to work upon, there is a great deal of mud at the bottom; therefore he prevails on us when he comes. But that is one end, that he might teach us to expect temptations, he himself was tempted; then certainly much more must we expect to be tempted.

Secondly, Jesus Christ was tempted, that he might know how to compassionate us in our temptations.

Thirdly, He was tempted, that he might take out the sting, the poyson, the venom of every temptation,

temptation, that though we be sorely assaulted by Satan, yet we may not be conquered by Satan. That that *David* speaks to *Saul*, *Psal.* 118. 13. *thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall, but the Lord helped me.* The like may Believers say of Satan, Thou hast thrust sore at me, if it were possible to thrust me into hell, but the Lord is my helper; nay, God can so order it, when Satan thrusts his sorest darts at us, he can ward off the blow, or at least, so order the temptation, that it shall kill our sins and not hurt our souls. As I have read a story of one *Parevs Jason*, who was conflicting with his adversary, when his adversary thought to have run him through with his sword, God did so order it, that it did open an impostumation, which all Phisitians could not heal; so that instead of killing of him, he preserved his life; so God can so order it, when Satan is thrusting sorely at us with his temptations, they shall kill our sins, but shall not hurt our souls. So then the words being opened to you, the way to the Doctrine is made plain, which is this.

Doct. *Christs temptations, and his sufferings for us, stirre up in his heart a tender compassion to succour us in our temptations, and in our sufferings.*

That which God commands *Israel* is suitable to this, *Exod.* 23. 9. *Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.* So the Lord Jesus Christ knows the hearts of tempted ones, and knows how to pity tempted ones, because he himself was tempted, That which the Apostle speaks, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. *God comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are*

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in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God. I may apply it thus; The Lord Jeſus Chriſt knows how to ſuccour us to comfort us, to ſupport us in our temptations, with the ſame comfort, with the ſame ſpirit that he had in his ſufferings, and in his temptations, though his temptations were ſo great, that he himſelf needed an Angel to come and comfort him. For the better explication of this point, there are two Quæries that would be ſatisfied.

Firſt, Why Chriſts ſufferings and temptations ſtirre up in his heart ſuch tender compaſſion towards us, to ſuccour and relieve us in our temptations and ſufferings?

Secondly, How the Lord Jeſus Chriſt does ſuccour and relieve poor tempted ones, in their diſtreſſes and ſufferings?

For the firſt, Why does Chriſts ſufferings and temptations, ſtir up in his heart ſuch tender compaſsions towards us? I anſwer, The reaſon is plainly this; becauſe the Lord Jeſus Chriſt his ſuffering in our Nature, makes him not only a merciful God, but a merciful Man alſo; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as he is God equal with the Father to all Eternity, ſo, *his mercyes are from everlaſting to everlaſting.* Pſal. 103. 17. But now his ſufferings in our fleſh, makes him not only a merciful God, but a merciful man alſo, a merciful Mediatour between God and man; ſo he hath not only beams of Majeſty, but bowels of mercy; his ſufferings made him a merciful high Prieſt, that is touched with the ſenſe of our infirmityes, as you read *Heb.* 4. 15. for (ſays he) *We have not an high Prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but*

but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered all our natural infirmities, though he did not suffer our sinful infirmities; He was tempted in all things like unto us, yet without sin: a merciful high Priest he is, and this is that, that makes him so tender hearted to the sufferings and infirmities of his People: Oh, what bowells of compassion hath Jesus Christ towards the souls of poor People. *Mat.* 9. 36. the Text says, *When he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd*; his Bowels did earn towards them, as the word ἐσπλαγχνίσθη signifies he had compassion on their souls, because they wanted those that might instruct them in the way of life and happiness. And what compasion had he on the bodies of poor ones, that waited on his Doctrine? *Mat.* 15. 32. *Then Jesus called his disciples to him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have continued with me now three dayes, and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.* And what compasion had he towards the poor Widow, that had lost her only son, and they were now carrying him to the Grave; the Text says, he had compassion on her, his Bowels did earn towards the poor Widow; therefore he touched the Coffin and raised him up again, *Luk.* 7. 13. Look as a Child-bearing woman, that hath felt the bitter pangs and pains of Child-birth, hath more compassion towards a woman in that distress, then a barren woman that never felt those pangs and sorrows; or, as a man that hath been sorely afflicted with

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the Gout or Stone, pittyeth another man that is afflicted with the ſame diſeaſe, more then one that never felt the torment of that diſeaſe, and as it is ſtoried of Queen *Elizabeth*, when ſhe paſt once through an Hoſpital, where ſhe ſaw many poor Orphans, and Fatherleſs, and helpleſs Children; Oh, ſays ſhe, I was once an Orphan, a poor helpleſs creature when I was ſhut up in priſon, therefore, ſays ſhe, I have taſted of the ſufferings of Orphans, and I cannot but be merciful to Orphans: and as it is ſaid of *Luther*, that he was a rare and excellent man in comforting afflicted conſciences, thoſe that were tempted and afflicted, why, becauſe he himſelf was exerciſed with temptations for three years together; ſo here, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is a moſt rare and excellent Comforter, a Phyſitian good at all diſeaſes, eſpecially at binding up broken hearts, and comforting tempted ſouls; why, becauſe he himſelf had experience of the ſting, and venom of temptations: but ſome may ſay, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is now in heaven: hath he not left the bowels that he had on earth? I anſwer, No, the Text ſays, *Iſai.* 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them, in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old*, Acts 9. 4. The Lord Chriſt crys out, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* when a man treads upon another mans little toe, the tongue complains, why do you hurt me? Jeſus Chriſt when he is now in heaven, he complains of himſelf being perſecuted in his Members, he hath ſuch a ſimpathy with them. That's the firſt Quærie.

Secondly, it may be demanded, how does Jesus Christ succour, and relieve his servants, in their temptations? I answer, he succours and relieves them these 5 ways.

First, By discovering to them that it is a temptation, for many there are that mistake their temptations, some take temptations for the impulses, or impresses of Gods spirit, not considering that there are tempting providences, as well as approving providences: such a providence was that which you read of, when *David* had *Saul* at an advantage, 1 *Sam.* 26. 8. when *Saul* lay sleeping in his trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster, then said *Abishai* to *David*, *God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand this day, now therefore let me smite him I pray thee with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time*; *Abishai* thought that this was an approving medicine, that God hath delivered *Saul* into the hands of *David*, and now he may be avenged upon him, and cut his throat, and smite him presently; nay, nay, says *David* to *Abishai*, destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lords annointed and be guiltless; *David* saw it was a tempting providence, not an approving providence, he would not have a hand in his blood, he would not slay the Lords annointed, though his enemy, though a wicked men, though a man guilty of blood, for he had slain Fourscore of the Lords Priests at one time, commanding *Doeg* to fall upon them and destroy them: But saies *David*, I will not have a hand in the blood of the Lords annointed, though he hath delivered them into my hand: this was

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but a tempting providence, not an approving providence: this is a certain Rule, that there are tempting providences as well as approving providences; to follow providence without the Word is dangerous, to follow providence against the Word is damnable; but to follow providence with the Word, that only is safe and comfortable: now *David* he had a providence here, but he had not the word of God going along with that providence, and therefore he looks upon it as a tempting providence. Now Jesus Christ succours his people, by discovering to them which is a tempting providence, and which is an approving providence.

Secondly, The Lord Christ succours and relieves them by his Gracious supportation, he does support them under their tryalls, that is a precious Scripture, that tempted ones should be continually meditating upon, 1 *Cor.* 10.13. *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*, God sometimes draws the Bow to the Arrow head, but he will not break the Bow; if God lays heavy loads on poor tempted ones, then he will make their shoulders so much the stronger by his Gracious Manutency, or holding them by the hand, *Psal.* 73. 23. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand*: and when God holds a poor tempted soul by the right hand, *though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down because the Lord upholds him.* Psal. 37.24.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ relieves & succours tempted ones by his gracious intercession; for he sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for them, *Hebr.* 7.25. and if so be thou art but one that does but desire to believe in Jesus Christ, and take hold of him, though it be but with a trembling hand, know thus much for thy comfort, in every temptation that thou meetest with, Jesus Christ does nominate thee to his Father, he nominates thee in particular, and he says to thee as he did to *Peter, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, Luke* 22. 32.

Fourthly, Jesus Christ does succour and relieve tempted ones by making a diversion some way or other of them; by a less temptation sometimes he prevents a greater, that would even crush a poor soul to pieces; sometimes by an outward affliction upon the body, he prevents a greater affliction and trouble that would ly upon the spirit: It is better a thousand times to be afflicted in the body, then afflicted in the mind.

Fifthly, The Lord Christ doth succour tempted ones by a gracious Abolition, as I may call it, by a totall removall of the temptation, when he treads Satan under our feet, as he hath promised, *Rom.* 16.20. *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* And when he gives charge to Satan as he did to him concerning the poor Child that was possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, *I charge thee that thou come out of him, and that thou enter into him no more,* Mark 9.25. Thus you have the point opened: Now briefly to apply it, two Uses I shall make of it. First for Information. Secondly for Consolation.

First,

First, for Information: you may learn this Lesson by way of Inference, That Gods own People, his Elect, true Believers must look for temptations, nay they must look for divers temptations, *James* 1.12. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*: in 1 *Pet.*1.6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a season if need be, ye are in heavinesse, through manifold temptations.* They must look for temptations of all sorts; as the Apostle saith in the like case, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution: so all that will live godly, must look for temptations. Gods People may be tempted these four wayes.

First, sometimes they may be tempted by their godly friends; so was St. *Paul Acts* 21.12. when the Prophet *Agabus* foretold, that *Paul* should be bound at *Hierusalem*, and suffer so many things of the Jews, *Pauls* godly friends diswaded him from going thither: But *Paul* lookt upon it as a temptation; for says he in the next verse, *What mean ye to weep and to break my heart, for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to dy at Hierusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts* 21.13.

Secondly, Gods People are sometimes tempted by wicked men, as *Joseph* was by his wanton and lascivious Mistress.

Thirdly, Gods People are tempted sometimes by Satan, they are tempted to presumption on the one hand, and to desperation on the other hand; For these are two great rocks upon which thousands of souls suffer shipwrack: but there are more that perish on the rock of presumption, then of desperation.

Fourthly, Gods Children are sometimes tempted

ted by God himself us: that it is said God tempted *Abraham* to try him, *Gen.* 22. 1. *And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham, and he said, behold here I am:* But yet remember this withall, God tempts only by way of probation, God does not tempt by way of seduction; God tempts none but by way of probation. If it be so, then Christians should be expecting temptations when you foresee a dart that is shot against you, you may the more easily avoid it; If you be fore-warned, you may the more easily be fore-armed.

The second Use, it is for Consolation; here is matter of unspeakable comfort to all tempted ones: It may be I speak to some such in this Congreation this day; we find every Lords day some that send in their Bills to be prayed for, that are battered, and bruised with temptations. Now I do not know one portion of Scripture in the whole Book of God, that affords more sweet soul-supporting comfort then this Text, though you see matter of discouragement to you from your temptations, yet you may look for matter of incouragement from Christs temptations. Art thou tempted to distrust thy adoption, whether thou art a Child of God or no; so was Jesus Christ; *If thou be the Son of God.* If thou art tempted to distrust the providence of God, so was Jesus Christ; *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,* when he was led into the Wilderness, and was there fourty days, and had nothing to eat: Art thou tempted to presumption, so was Jesus Christ, that he should cast himself down headlong from the pinacle of the temple. Art thou

thou tempted to ſelf-murther? ſo was the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when Satan would have had him caſt himſelf down from the pinacle of the Temple to deſtroy himſelf. Art thou tempted to blaſphemy? ſo was Jeſus Chriſt; for it was the moſt horrid blaſphemy that could be named, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhould fall down and worſhip a curſed Vaſſall, Satan, that he ſhould give that honour to that curſed wretch that was due only to God: there was no ſin ſo horrid, nor heynous, nor helliſh, to which Chriſt was not tempted, he was tempted to the vileſt ſin that is, but he yielded not. Hence you may obſerve, that it is not ſin to be tempted to ſin, but it is ſin to yield to temptations; therefore do not yield to temptations. Art thou tempted either to preſumption, or deſperation, or Atheiſme, or blaſphemy? do not yield to that temptation, but run to Jeſus Chriſt under that temptation even as the chickens run under the Hens wing, when they ſee the Kite coming, and ſay, O Lord Jeſus, thou waſt tempted that thou mighteſt ſuccour me when I am tempted, Oh do not lead me into temptation, but deliver me from the evil, that I do not faint under them, nor be foyled by them: Lead me not into temptation, that is, leave me not in temptations, but lead me out of them, for I flye to thee.

But may be you will ſay to me, what means or helps may we uſe, that we may be ſtrengthened againſt temptations, thoſe temptations wherewith Satan Aſſaults us. For anſwer to this, let me briefly give theſe ſeven or eight practicall rules, which I earneſtly beg of you that you would make uſe of.

The firſt practicall rule is this, let not Satan

know all that is in thy heart, for thereby Satan may get a great advantage against you; do not speak all that thou thinkest; if thou be one inclined (for example) to the sin of pride, do not shew it in thy gayish apparel; if thou be one inclined to the sin of uncleanness, do not shew it in thy wanton gesture; if thou be one inclined to covetousness, do not shew in thy earthly, greedy, gaping after riches; let not Satan know what is in thy heart.

2ly, do not tempt the tempter to tempt thee; my meaning is this, be not bold with those sins for which thou hast before smarted, for by fostering any unmortified lust, thou putteſt a weapon into Satans hand, to wound thee with; be not bold with the occasions of sin; do not venture into the Devils quarters, as St. *Peter* did you know when he went into the High-priests Hall, there he met with an occasion to sin, he tempted Satan to tempt him.

Thirdly, do not think by yielding to one temptation, thou shalt be free from all the rest; for if thou yield but to one temptation, Satan will be more violent in tempting thee then he was before. I have read of a young man that was tempted to three gross sins, to kill his Father, to abuse his Mother, and to be drunk; the Devil told him, if he would yield to one of these, he should be tempted no more; at last he yielded to that which was the least of them, namely to be drunk: but when he had yielded to one, the Devil prevailed with him after to do the two other, so that he kill'd his Father, abused his Mother; so that by yielding to one temptation, thou dost strengthen Satan, but

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it weakens thy own hands. As they ſay of the *French* in their fighting, at the firſt onſet they are like Lyons, but if they be ſtrongly reſiſted at the firſt, then they are very Cowards: So it is here, the Devil at his firſt Aſſault is violent, the ſecond Aſſault, if he be reſiſted, is weaker, if he be reſiſted in his third Aſſault he is a very Coward; therefore *reſiſt the Devill and he will flye from you*, James 4.7. hold thy weapon in thy hand, though it be beaten to thy head. As they obſerve of the Crocadile in *Nilus*, if you run away from the Crocadile, then he will follow you; but if you come up to follow him manfully, then he will run away from you: So if Satan be reſiſted, he is a very Coward.

Fourthly, The fourth practicall rule is this, Do not lay all the blame upon Satan for thy temptations, but lay the blame in a great meaſure upon thy ſelf, upon thy own receptive tinder-like diſpoſition; oh complain to God and ſay, true Lord, the Devil is continually ſtriking fire, but my heart is too ready to take the fire: I have a tinder-like heart, more ready to take fire, then the Devil is to ſtrike; and therefore thou ſhouldeſt wet thy tinder with thy tears, that the fire of temptation may not take hold of thy heart. You may read of our Grand-mother *Eve*, ſhe layed all the blame upon the Serpent, *The Serpent deceived me, and I did eat*. But *David* on the contrary, having a holy frame of heart, laid the blame upon himſelf, when Satan tempted him to number the People, 2 *Sam* laſt, he complains not of Satan, but himſelf; ſays he, *Loe I have ſinned, I have ſinned, I have done wickedly, as for theſe ſheep what have they done?* So I ſay, lay

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the blame on thy Tinder-like heart.

Fifthly, Observe Satan in his first temptations, is more modest then he is usually afterwards, his first temptations are usually of a finer-spun thred, that so he may draw into greater sins: for example, when he tempted our Saviour, his first temptation was this, says he, *Mat.* 4. *cause these stones to be made bread*, thou mayst as well turn stones into bread, as *water into wine*, but then afterwards he comes to more gross and grievous temptations to cast himself down headlong, to murther himself and commit the horridest Idolatry that can be named; so Satan is modest at the first, he will perswade thee to tell a merry jocond lye, to tell a lye in jest, that is no great matter; from a jesting lye, he perswades thee to tell an officious lye, for an advantage to thy self, or neighbour; from an officious lye, he will tempt thee to a pernicious lye, to tell a lye for thy neighbours ruine; for the ruine of thy neighbours Name, or Goods, or Life. Oh, observe the wiles of Satan, his temptations, are at first more modest.

The sixth Rule is this, Do not think when one temptation is conquered, or resisted, that therefore thy corruption is mortified, or, that the Devil is quite vanquished, or quite hath left thee: no, for Satan left our Saviour but for a season, *Luk* 4. 13. after he was shamefully vanquished, and foyled; he left him for a season, he came to him again as he did in *Joh.* 14. 30. *the Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.* The Devil like a Ram, sometimes retires that he may come forwards with the greater violence.

Seventhly, would you be strengthned against tempta-

temptations, then above all, take the Shield of faith, that is the Apoſtles rule, *Eph.* 6. 16. *Above all take the ſhield of faith, whereby you may quench all the fiery darts of the divel,* Faith is the eye of the ſoul; Now as a cunning fencer, when he is ſtriving with his adverſary, the firſt thing that he aims at, is to ſtrike out the eye of him with whom he is conteſting; if he can but ſtrike out the eye, then he knows he hath a great advantage: ſo the Devil this cunning fencer, he ſtrikes at the eye of faith, if he can but conquer thy faith, he knows he ſhall conquer thy ſoul; therefore ſays he; I fight neither againſt ſmall nor great, but againſt this King Grace; I fight againſt Faith, therefore our Saviour prays that *Peters* faith ſhould not fail; ſo long as his faith did not fail, though his other Graces be routed, and broken, yet faith will recover all. That was an admirable Captain, who when the Battle was loſt, recovered it again himſelf when all his Souldiers fled and left him; namely *Shammah*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 12. *He alone ſtood to the battle, and conquered a whole Troup, and ſlew many of the Philiſtines:* Faith may be compared to *Shammah*, when other Graces are foyled, and routed, our faith will recover all again: now how ſhould we ſtrengthen faith? faith is compared to a ſhield; now this ſhield is compoſed of four or five plates.

Firſt, The gracious promiſes that God hath made; this is one plate that makes the ſhield of faith, you cannot be caſt into ſuch a condition, wherein you may not meet with ſome promiſe; therefore ſtudy the promiſes ſuch as theſe: *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee, when*

When thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee. Iſai. 43.2. So that is an excellent Scripture, *Iſai.* 42. 19. *And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known, I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight, theſe things will I do unto them, and not forſake them*; what a precious promiſe is that, though God leads his people through a dark wilderneſs, as I ma ſay, and they ſee not one beam of light; yet notwithſtanding, if they lean upon the Lord, he will cauſe darkneſs to be light before them.

A ſecond plate that the ſhield of faith is compoſed of, and made up of, is the glorious Atributes of God, Gods wiſdom, power, mercy, goodneſs, truth, all theſe put together, do ſpell ſufficiency; the wiſdom of God to guide us, the power of God to protect us, the mercy of God to pity us, and the like.

Thirdly, another Plate is this, The triumphant victory of Jeſus Chriſt, he hath conquered our enemy, bleſſed be his name; our Saviour he hath cruſht the head of the Serpent, as *Luther* ſaid excellently, *Why ſhould we fear a conquered world, when the conquerour himſelf is on our ſide*; ſo why ſhould we fear a conquered enemy, a curſed enemy, when the conquerour himſelf is on our ſide.

The fourth Plate is this, The former experiments we have had of Gods goodneſs, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. *Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver us.* And when the Prophet *David* was in thoſe ſtraights, when he cryed out, *will the Lord caſt*

caſt off for ever, and will he be favourable no more, hath God forgotten to be gracious, hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies? oh, ſays he, *This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the moſt high.* Pſal. 77. 7,8,9,10. *I will remember thee from the Land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites from the hill Nizar*, there I had a deliverance, and there I had a deliverance; and when my ſoul is caſt down within me, I will remember thee at ſuch a place, and at ſuch a place, where thou didſt work a great deliverance for me, *Pſal.* 42.

Fifthly, The laſt Plate the ſhield of faith is made up of, is Gods infinite love, in giving of Jeſus Chriſt, *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* If God hath given us Jeſus Chriſt, he will give us ſupportation under trouble, and he will give us deliverance out of trouble.

The laſt Direction is this, give not over praying although for the preſent thou ſeeſt not the fruit of thy prayers, give not over praying, but remember he that was tempted for thee on earth, is now interceding for thee in heaven; Satan cannot be more ready to aſſault thee, then Jeſus Chriſt to aſſiſt thee; Satan cannot be ſo buſie on earth to hurt thee, as Jeſus Chriſt is buſie in heaven to help thee; and prayer through the interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt can caſt out Devils. Mr. *Fox* in his book of Martyrs in the ſecond Volume, ſpeaking of *Luther* in the life of King *Henry* the eighth, mentions a ſtory of a man that was poſſeſſed with the Devill; that had ſold his ſoul to the Devill, at

Witten-

Wittenberg. But *Luther* got a company of praying Christians together, to seek God on his behalf, and would not give over seeking till they had received an Answer: So at last, the Devil in a great wind threw the Indenture in at the window. Sometimes prayer casts out the Devill; God sometimes gives such signall testimonies of hearing prayer, for the incouragement of his servants; therefore do not give over resisting Satans temptations, nor praying against him. Do as that blessed Saint *Katharine Bretter*, when she was continually haunted with Satans temptations; said she, Satan, I am but a weak woman, I am not able to answer all thy cavils and objections, but I will turn thee over to my Advocate, I have an Advocate in heaven, to plead my cause; and after that she was never solicited by him. So do you, turn over thy case to thy Advocate, as a poor Client does that has got a learned and faithfull Advocate, leaves his cause with him: turn over all to thy Advocate, that appears in the presence of God continually for thee, *Heb.* 9. 24. *For Christ is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us*; he appears as our Advocate. And if God do not answer thee speedily, or if he do not answer thee in the Letter of thy request, yet if thou canst but get such a frame of heart as those three Worthies had, *Dan.* 3. 17, 18. *Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand O King: But if not, be it known unto thee O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship thy golden image, which thou hast set up.*

So

So do thou ſay to Satan, God is able to deliver me out of thy hands; but yet, if he do not, I am reſolved I will not yield unto thee Satan, but I will lye at the feet of God, and look up. If God do but give ſuch a gracious frame of ſpirit, as of this, thou mayſt be confident this text ſhall be fulfilled to thee, and that heaven and earth ſhall paſs away before this truth ſhall paſs away, held forth in this Doctrine, That Chriſts ſufferings and temptations ſtir up in his heart a compaſſion to ſuccour and relieve us in our ſufferings and temptations.

Heb. 4. 1.

Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.

IN the laſt Text that I opened unto you, out of 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. *And hath brought life and immortality to light through the Goſpel*, I ſhewed you, That the Salvation of God, or eternal Life and Salvation, was revealed to the ſons of men by the preaching of the Goſpel, and how infinitely we ſtand indebted and engaged to our God for our Goſpel mercies and priviledges; that we are in a capacity of getting our ſouls ſaved; that we ſit not in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death as others do; that we are *not aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael*, (the Church of God, as others are) that *we are not ſtrangers to the Covenant of Grace*, *Eph.* 2. 12. and ſtrangers to the myſteries of ſalvation, and the way of ſalvation revealed in the Goſpel.

Certainly Brethren, we ſhall never know how much we are indebted unto God, nor can

ever praise him enough for our Gospel-mercies until we come to Heaven. That I aim at in the choice of this Text, is to shew you, and (if it be possible) to make you sensible of the infinite and unconceivable danger of missing this Salvation, this eternal Life that is held forth in the Gospel; *Let us therefore fear, lest* &c. For, as I shall shew you by Gods assistance, if any of us who have the means of Salvation tendered to us in the Gospel, and that hope of Salvation, and the way to Salvation; if any of us should come short of Salvation, it were better a thousand times that we had never known the Gospel; for none shall have a deeper place in Hell, then they that have had Gospel-opportunities, and *have not known in that their day the things that belong to their peace*: And certainly the tears of Hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of Heaven, the loss of Salvation; *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entring into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*

For the connexion of this, or the coherence of these words with the former Chapter, take it thus briefly: If you look upon this Epistle to the *Hebrews* with a discerning eye, you shall see that the scope of the Apostle is to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ in his three glorious offices, of a King, and of a Priest, and of a Prophet, and to shew his Dignity and Preheminence above the Angels, in Chap. 1. above *Moses*, in Chap. 3. above *Aaron*, in Chap 7.

Now the Apostle proving in Chap. 3. the

Dignity

Dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ above *Moses*, although *Moses* was the most eminent man that ever lived upon the earth, (there was none that ever had more acquaintance with God, talking with him familiarly, as a man talks with his friend; and therefore he was said to be a King in *Jesurun*) yet the Apostle proves the Dignity and Preheminence of Jesus Christ above *Moses*; in Chap. 3. 5, 6. saith the Apostle, *And* Moses *verily was faithful in all his house*, that is, in the Church of God, *as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Jesus Christ as a Son over his own house*; and therefore Christ is far above *Moses*. And he takes occasion from hence to lay down this serious Exhortation to these *Hebrews*, and in them, to all succeeding Christians, that they should take heed that they do not harden their hearts against the voice of Jesus Christ, in *v.* 15. of the fore-going Chapter, *To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts, as in the provocation*. Harden not your hearts against Christ, against the voice of Christ in his Word; that this Exhortation might take the deeper impression, the Apostle puts them in mind of a dreadful example of Gods wrath and indignation executed upon the stubborn *Israelites* in the Wilderness; they hardned their hearts, they believed not his Word, and therefore God was so offended with them, that their carcases perished in the Wilderness; yea, the Lord took an oath, he *sware that they should never enter into his Rest*: Having laid down this dreadful example

of Gods wrath in *v.* 17, 18. of the foregoing Chapter, thereupon he infers this serious admonition, That all Christians should take heed that they run not into the same danger that they did; and that they do not deprive themselves of that eternal Rest that is laid up in Heaven, as the *Israelites* deprived themselves of the Rest of *Canaan*; *Let us therefore* (saith the Apostle) *fear lest a promise being left us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*; so then in the Text you may take notice of these three Particulars:

1. You have a serious Premonition or forewarning, in these words, *Let us therefore fear.*

2. You have the ground or foundation of this Premonition, in these words, *Lest a promise being left us of entring into his Rest.*

3. A dreadful danger discovered, in case this warning be neglected, in these words, *Any of you seem to come short of it*; that is, short of that eternal Rest that is promised.

In the first, the serious Premonition or forewarning, you have these two particulars; First, the occasion of this Premonition, in this word *Therefore*; Now this word *therefore*, hath reference to something that went before in the foregoing Chapter; the Apostle had told us of a generation of sinners in the Wilderness, that had provoked the Lord to anger for forty years together, insomuch that *the Lord sware that they should not enter into his Rest*; and so it came to pass; for of six hundred thousand that came out of *Egypt*, there were but two, namely, *Caleb*

leb and *Joſhua*, that entred into the Land of *Canaan*; I ſay not above two (of thoſe that were above twenty years old) that entred into the Land of *Canaan*, but their carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs, the Wilderneſs was their grave; therefore, ſaith he, becauſe of this dreadful example of Gods wrath upon theſe ſtubborn *Iſraelites*, *Let us fear*; it is as if he ſhould ſay, let their wo be our warning, their deſtruction ſhould be our inſtruction: from hence you may take this point of Doctrine.

The examples of Gods wrath upon other ſinners, ſhould make us very careful to ſhun their ſins.

And then ſecondly, you have the Premonition it ſelf, in theſe words, *Let us therefore fear*; and from thence you may take this Obſervation:

The life of a Chriſtian muſt be a life of fear; The whole courſe of a Chriſtians life muſt be a courſe of godly and watchful fear.

And then you have the ground or foundation of this Premonition, in theſe words, *Leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt*; wherein you have three Particulars.

1. That there is a heavenly Reſt, an eternal Reſt prepared; this the Apoſtle takes for granted; he ſpeaks here of entring into this

Rest, therefore there is a rest prepared; from whence you may take this Observation:

That there is a Rest prepared in Heaven for Gods People.

2. This rest is not only prepared, but it is also promised; observe here, saith the Apostle, *Lest a promise being left us of entring into his Rest*; from hence you may observe,

That the Rest prepared in Heaven for Gods People, is not only prepared, but also promised to all them that do believe.

3. Take notice, this Rest, though it be prepared and promised, may yet be left and forsaken by those to whom the promise is tendred, for so the word here in the original signifies, lest the promise be forsaken; I know our translation reads the word thus, lest a promise being left us, as if so be this were the sense of it, lest a promise being given us, lest a promise being left us as a Legacy, lest a promise being bestowed upon us; but the word *Us* is not in the Original, nor in the old Translation, as a late Learned eminent Writer, in his Commentary on the Epistle to the *Hebrews* observes; the old translation seems to come nearest the sense, which reads it thus, Lest by forsaking the promise, we

καταλειπομένης. Dr. Gouge.

we be deprived of that rest; so that although the promise be made, though the promise of entring into rest be tendered to many; yet notwithstanding this promise may be left, may be forsaken; the words being taken in this sense, you may observe this Proposition or Doctrine from them.

Though God be infinitely gracious in making a promise of eternal rest, yet many there are that do shamefully forsake this promise.

The third and last branch of the Text, is the dreadful danger discovered, in case this premonition be neglected, that is in these words, *lest any of you should seem to come short of it*; you have three particulars;

First the Persons that must avoid this dreadful danger, in these words, *any of you*; It is very observable here, how jealous the Apostle is of these Hebrews, lest any of them should prove Apostates and Back-sliders, and fall off from their profession and principles, and so forsake the promise, and by forsaking the promise should come short of eternal rest; from whence you may take this Observation or point of Doctrine.

In matters of soul-concernment, Christians should be very jealous, not onely of themselves, but of others also.

Secondly, Observe the manner or extent

of avoiding this dreadful danger, in this phrase *seem*; lest any *seem to come short of it*; it is as if the Apostle should say, it is not enough for you to abstain from Apostacy and back-sliding, which will cause your coming short of heaven, but you must avoyd the very seeming and appearance of it; it is not enough that you do not utterly fall away, but you must likewise take heed that you give no occasions to others to think that you are fallen away, or like to fall away; from whence you may observe this Doctrine;

That it is not enough for Christians to abstain from evil, but they must also abstain from the appearance of evil, and avoid the occasions of danger.

But I come to the third and last particular, in the last branch of the Text, which is indeed the most awakening and soul-shaking truth that you meet with in the whole Book of God; that is, the inconceivable damage, or unvaluable loss, that will fall upon them that do neglect the Apostles premonition here, that is, that they shall come short of eternal life; *lest any of you* (saith he) *should seem to come short of it*, or lest any of you should be deprived of that eternal rest, that is prepared for, and promised to, all those that do beleive; so then, in this last particular, in the last branch of the Text, there is something implyed, and something expressed; that which is implyed, is this, that it is possible for those that do profess the truth, to come short

of heaven, or else the Apostle would not have set down this premonition here: And then that which is expresst is this, that it is a most unvaluable and unconceiveable loss, to come short of heaven; so then from hence, there are these two points of Doctrine I shall commend to you; and truly they are two very startling and awakening truths, as by Gods assistance you shall hear in the prosecution of them: And the first Doctrine is this;

Doct. 1. *That it is possible for many that profess the truth, and are confident that they are in a state of grace, and seem to come very neer to Heaven, yet for all that to come short of Heaven.*

Doct. 2. *To come short of Heaven, or that eternal happiness which is prepared for the Saints in light, is a most dreadful, unconceiveable, unvaluable, irrecoverable loss, a loss that should be trembled at by all sorts of persons whatsoever.*

I begin with the first Doctrine, that it is possible for many that do profess the truth, or true Religion, and are confident that they do belong to God, and are in a state of grace, and do seem to come very neer to heaven, yet for all that to come short of Heaven, this is a very awaking truth; but I shall by Gods assistance make it clear to you, and confirm it in the three branches of it.

First,

First, that it is possible for many professours of the truth or true Religion to come short of Heaven.

Secondly, That it is possible for many that are confident that they are in a state of grace, to come short of Heaven.

Thirdly, that it is possible for many that come very neer to Heaven, yet to come short of Heaven.

I shall prove these three, and let your hearts go along with me; and Oh that you and I could follow the counsel of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *To hear the Word of the Lord with trembling.*

For the first, That it is possible for many that profess the truth and true Religion, to come short of Heaven, I shall give you two instances for this; the *Scribes* and *Pharises*, were those that professed the truth and true Religion, they sat in *Moses* Chair; our Saviour commanded his Disciples to hear them, because they opened the Law, they were expounders of the Law, and our Saviour commanded his Disciples to hear them, although they should not do as they did; they professed the truth and true Religion, and in the outward acts of piety, these *Scribes* and *Pharises*, went exceeding far. I will shew you how far they went in these six particulars.

First, they searched the Scriptures, they were very diligent in reading the Law of *Moses*, they gave themselves so much to the study of the Law, that they could tell exactly almost every verse in the five books of *Moses*, nay they could

could tell you how often every letter in the Hebrew Alphabet, was repeated in the Law of *Moses*; for example the Letter *Aleph* was repeated three hundred seventy seven times in the five books of *Moses*.

Secondly, they were frequent in prayer; they prayed in the streets, and in the Synagogue, and made long prayers, for a pretence to devour Widows house, *Mat.* 23. 14.

Thirdly, to prayer they added fasting also; hear what one of them saith, *Luk.* 18. 12. *I fast twice in the week*, and this he did for the tameing of the body.

Fourthly, they were very strickt in the observation of the Sabbath, insomuch that they quarrelled with our Saviour, because his Disciples did but pluck the ears of Corn upon the Sabbath day; Nay they were so superstitious in the observation of the Sabbath, that if one had got a thorne in his foot, they would not pull it out upon the Sabbath day, for fear of breaking the Sabbath.

Fifthly, they were very industrious in teaching of others; *they compassed Sea and Land to make a Proselyte*, Mat. 23. 15. they would have taken any paines to win others to the same Sect or Religion with themselves.

Sixthly, they were very exact and unblameable in their outward conversation; for,

1. They were free from those grosse and scandalous sins which stare a man in the face; *God I thank thee* (saith the *Pharisee*) *that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers,*

or

or even as this Publican, Luk. 18. 11. Nay, they separated themselves from notorious sinners; they would not come into the company of Drunkards and Sabbath-breakers; they were of the strictest Religion amongst the Jews, their Religion was the most strait Sect, *Act.* 26. 5. *which knew me from the beginning, if they would testifie, that after the most strait Sect of our Religion, I lived a Pharisee*; insomuch that it was generally conceived among the Jews, that if there were but two men in all the world that should go to Heaven, a *Scribe* was one, and a *Pharisee* the other; and yet those Professors for all that fell short of Heaven; and our Saviour saith, *that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven*, Mat. 5. 20.

Let me give you an other example of the five foolish Virgins which you read of in *Mat.* 25. Our Saviour tells us, that five Virgins were wise, and five were foolish; by Virgins there are meant Professors, and they are called Virgin Professors, because they were not tainted or defiled with any gross or scandalous sin; even those five foolish Virgins, they notwithstanding in thir own opinion, and in the opinion of others, were waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom Christ; and yet for all this, those Virgin Professors fell short of Heaven, *Mat.* 25. 10. *And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage, and the door was shut*; the

the door of Heaven, the door of mercy was shut against them; so you see the first branch proved.

2. Let me prove the second branch, that it is possible for many that are confident that they are in a state of grace, and that they have an interest in, and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, to come short of Heaven; in *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *Many will say to me in that day*, (at the great day of judgement) *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out Divels, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? and then will I Profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity*; Mark, how confident they are, *have we not Propheſied in thy name, and caſt out divils in thy name? We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence*, Luke 13. 26. to whom Jeſus Chriſt will say, *depart from me ye that work iniquity, get you out of my ſight, I cannot abide to look upon you*; theſe were confident; what a deal of confidence expreſs they! as if they had been as really acquainted with Jeſus Chriſt as any were; *Lord, Lord, have not we Propheſied in thy name? &c.* Again, in *Rom.* 2. 17, 18, 19. the Apoſtle ſpeaks there to that boaſting Jew, *Thou reſteſt in the Law, and makeſt thy boaſt of God, and knoweſt his will, and approveſt the things that are more excellent, being inſtructed out of the Law, and art confident that thou thy ſelf art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkneſs, an inſtructor of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes, which haſt the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the*

Law;

Law; thou therefore which teachest an other; teachest thou not thy self? Such a one as teacheth others, and teacheth not himself, such a one is stark naught; so that it is possible for a man to be a teacher of others, and confident of coming to heaven, and yet for all that come short of it; thats the second branch.

3. Let me prove the third branch of the Doctrine, that it is possible for men to come very neer to heaven, and yet for all that to come short of heaven; let me give you some examples for that; this was the case of the young man in the Gospel, which you read of, *Mat.* 19. 20, 21. when our Saviour bid him to keep the Commandements, saith he, *Lord, all these things I have kept from my youth up*; the meaning is this, as to his outward conversation he was unblameable, he came so neer heaven, that as St. *Mark* relates the story, *Mark* 10. 21. *Jesus beholding him, loved him*, that is, he looked upon him in a very friendly manner and pitied him, that such a one should come so neer to Heaven, and yet come short of it, by resting on his own self-righteousness; he came neer heaven, but yet he came short of it; so *Herod* came neer Heaven, *Mark* 6. 20. *he heard John Baptist gladly*, and he did many things that *John Baptist* bid him, and yet he came short of it; so you read of a *Scribe*, *Mark* 12. 34. that answered very discreetly to our Saviour; our Saviour tells him, *thou art not far from the Kingdom of God*, and yet he came short of it; what a sad thing was that!

so

so *Agrippa*, *Almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian*, Act. 26. 28. but yet he was not a whole Christian; so he came neer to heaven, but yet he came short of Heaven; But here it may be demanded;

Quest. *But how far then may a man go on in the profession of the truth and true Religion, and yet come short of heaven?*

To this I Answer; Truely a professour may go so far, that the hearing of it may make some of you tremble, and to say, What will become of me? Now I shall shew you that in three particulars.

A Man may have

1. A very glorious shew of grace and holiness, and yet have no true grace at all.
2. Admirable gifts and parts, and qualifications, and yet have no true grace at all.
3. Some superficial beginnings, and tasts of grace and Holiness, and yet have no truth of grace, but come short of Heaven.

First, a man may have a very glorious shew of holiness, and yet have no true grace, and so come short of Heaven; he may have some-

thing

thing like grace which is not grace; as in a Garden, weeds may be so like good Herbs that it may be hard to know one from the other; a man may have such a shew of grace, that he may be thought to have grace in truth; let me give you instances in these four particulars.

First, a man may be a fair civil carriaged man, very innocent and inoffensive in his conversation, one that doth not oppose the Gospel, nor oppose the truth; this is something; somethere are that are Lyons, of whom *David* complains, *Psa.* 57. 4. *My soul is among Lyons, and I lye even among them that are set on fire*; some there are that have Lyon-like Spirits, whose hearts are all set on fire, that would overthrow Magistrates and Ministers, and Sabbaths, and Ordinances, and all; it is something for a man to be civil and inoffensive in his carriage, that he is no enemy to the Gospel.

Secondly, A man may be a frequenter of Ordinances, and a man may be a countenancer of Religion, and an owner of Magistracy and Ministry, and yet all this while have but a shew of grace, and no true grace at all. In *Luk.* 13. 26, 27. there you have some that will say to our Saviour, *Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and we have heard thee teach in our streets*; there are many that frequent Ordinances, that come to the Assemblies of Gods people day after day, and wait upon God in the use of his Ordinances, some that honour the Ministers of God, and yet

for

for all that come short of Heaven.

Thirdly, They may go farther; they may be maintainers and supporters of Ministers, both by their persons and purses; and thus it was with *Ananias* and *Saphira*; *they went and sold their possessions, and laid them down at the Apostles feet*, and yet come short of Heaven.

Fourthly, They may go so far, not onely to have a good opinion of themselves, but they may gain the good opinion of others: Nay, they may be well thought of by those that are men of judgement; those that are godly, may think well of them, that they are real Saints, and that their names are written in the book of life, as is meant by that Scripture in *Psa.* 69. 28. where *David* saith, *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous*; It cannot so be understood that a man that hath once his name written in the Book of life can have it blotted out; But the meaning is this, Blot them out of the Book of life, that is, discover their names were never written in that book; discover them to be but Hypocrites, though they carry themselves so fairly, that for the present others do think that their names are written in the book of life; *Judas* carried the matter so fair, that the rest of the Disciples questioned themselves rather then *Judas*. *Master is it I?* saith one of them; *Master is it I?* saith an other; they never dreamed that *Judas* should betray their Master; *Simon Magus* carried the matter so fair, that *Philip* that was

one of the Deacons, reckoned him to be a true beleiver, and was baptized, and continued with *Philip*; this is the first particular, that a man may have glorious shews of grace and holiness, and yet have no true grace at all.

Secondly, The second thing is to shew, that a man may have admirable gifts and parts, and qualifications that are like to grace, and yet are not true grace. For example.

A man may have an admirable gift in Preaching, he may be a very able Preacher, having a very acute and quick invention, a profound Judgement, a retentive memory, a clear Elocution; *Judas* I make no question was as good a Preacher as the rest of the eleven Apostles; a man may preach to others, and yet he himself in the mean while be a cast-away; Oh we that are Preachers, we may Preach against Pride with proud hearts, against covetousness with covetous hearts, press self-denyal with self-seeking hearts, press repentance with impenitent hearts; we may preach these things, and yet not feel them at all in our own hearts; So, a man may have an admirable gift in prayer (I do not say the grace of prayer) there is a great deal of difference between the gift and the grace of prayer; the gift of prayer makes a man proud, the grace of prayer makes a man humble; the gift of prayer abounds in outward expressions, the grace of prayer consists in inward impressions upon the heart; the gift of prayer vents it self in publique, but the grace of prayer is most enlarged

ged in private; the gift of prayer makes a man pray in his own strength, but the grace of prayer makes a man pray in the strength of Jesus Christ; the gift of prayer makes a man expect an eccho of prayse from men, but the grace of prayer expects onely the approbation of God; the gift of prayer that may be lost, but the grace of prayer is never lost; I say a man may have admirable gifts in prayer, excellent expressions, and seeming impressions upon the heart; some may pray like Saints, and in the mean time live like Divels. I am confident this deceives many; some there are that have fine voluble tongues in prayer, that a man would think them to be Angels in prayer; but look into their lives, and O how crooked are they in their paths and conversation?

So, a man may have the gift of Government, so much prudence, and policy, a man may be such a deep Polititian, that he may be able to ballance the affairs of a Kingdom, and yet have no grace at all; that was the case of *Achithophel*; he was so prudent and politique in his counsels, that he was esteemed as an Oracle of God, 2 *Sam.* 16. 23. And yet for all this, such a one may come short of Heaven; and that may be said to those men that have those parts, and gifts, and qualifications, and are not sanctified, that have the gifts of Preaching, and Praying, and Government, which was said to *Simon Magus*, *Thy money perish with thee*; so they and their gifts, and

parts, and qualifications, perish with them.

Thirdly, Again, you shall see in an other particular, how far professours may go and yet come short of Heaven; namely, he may have some superficial beginnings and tasts of grace and holiness, and yet have no truth of grace, and so come short of Heaven; let me shew you this in these four particulars.

1. He may be able to give his assent to the truth; he may consent to this truth that the Bible is the Word of God, and that he believes it is so; so *Simon Magus* did, *Act.* 8. 13. the Text saith that *he beleived.*

2. He may have so much knowledge as may move his affections with joy, that he may may rejoyce in the word that he knows; thus the Pharisees, *They rejoyced in John Baptists light for a season*, *John* 5. 35. and it is said of the second ground in the Parable, that they received the word with joy, *Luk.* 8. 13. and God speaks of the Hypocrites, *Isa.* 58. 2. *Yet they seek me dayly, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did righteousnes, and forsooke not the Ordinance of their God; they aske of me the Ordinances of Justice, they take delight in approaching to God*; and yet all this, it was but like a Land-flood that is quickly dried up, or like a flash of lightning which quickly passeth away.

3. He may have such a taste and superficial beginning of grace, that he may be moved so much at a Sermon, as to have some kind of purpose and resolution of amendment of life,

1 *Sam.* 26. 21. you may read there that wicked wretch and Hypocrite *Saul* had ſometimer good purpoſes and reſolutions; *Then ſaid* Saul, *I have ſinned; returne my Son* David, *for I will no more do thee harm*; he was convinced in his conſcience, that it was out of malice that he did perſecute that innocent Servant of God; ſo it may be you may have ſome drunkard, when he lies under the ſmarting rod of Gods diſpleaſure, to vow that he will never be drunk more.

4. A man may have this taſte and ſuperficial begininng of grace, that he may attain to ſome external reformation; *he may eſcape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. 2. 20. A natural carnal man, an Hypocrite may get ſo much ſoap out of the Word of God, as may waſh his outſide, but yet he may return to the mire again, becauſe he is a Swine ſtill; He may be waſhed like a Hog on the outſide, but yet he is a Swine ſtill; Hypocrites may abſtain from many ſins out of a ſlaviſh fear, and performe duties out of by-reſpects; *Jezabel* faſted, the *Phariſees* prayed, and gave almes, *Felix* feared and trembled, here was the beginnings and taſts of grace, theſe taſted of the heavenly gift, *Heb.* 6. 4. they had a taſte of the water of life, but they ſpit it out again.

But then it may be demanded, *What is the reaſon that a Profeſſor may go ſo far in the*

ways of Christianity, and yet come short of Heaven?

For Answer, I shall give you reasons for all these three particulars.

First, A Professour may go thus far in the way to Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven, for these two reasons.

1. Because there is some failing in his profession; his profession wants either root or sincerity, or Love to Jesus Christ.

It may be his profession wants root, he hath taken up the profession of Religion, but he was never yet humbled, the Plow of humiliation never went deep enough; he was never convinced of the indispensible need that he hath of Christ, to say, *Give me Christ or I dye*; he was never convinced of the evil of sin, of the burden of sin, of the loathsom nature of sin, of the Hell that is in every sin.

Or it may be he wants sincerity, he takes up Religion for by-ends, or for self-intereſt, or it may be he follows Christ for the Loaves; for indeed there are but few that follow Christ for Christs sake; It was the complaint of *Austin*, *Jesus is seldom sought for Jesus sake*; And as God complaines, Zach. 7. 5. *When ye fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me? Ephraim is an empty Vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself*, Hos. 10. 1.

Or it may be, his profession wants love; now love is an inward principle; and where the inward principle of love is in the heart, there

there profeſſion never failes, *Epheſ.* 6. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.* But now, it may be outwardly he hath ſome love to Jeſus Chriſt, as the Prophet *Ezekiel* ſpeaks of his hearers, or God to him concerning them, *Son of Man, the children of thy people come unto thee as the people cometh, and they ſit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but will not do them; for with their mouths they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs*, Ezek. 33. 30, 31. And the Lord Chriſt may ſay to them, juſt as *Daliah* ſaid to *Sampſon*, *How canſt thou ſay thou loveſt me, when thy heart is not with me?* Judg. 16. 15. That is one Reaſon.

2. A ſecond is this; Men may go ſo far in the way to Heaven, and yet come ſhort of it, becauſe though they have an outward lamp of profeſſion, yet they have no oyl in their lamps, that is, no reality; they have not that faith that works by love, they have not that repentance which teacheth them mortification, which crucifieth the fleſh; theſe are the reaſons of the firſt branch.

Secondly, It may be demanded, how comes it to paſs, that men may be ſo confident that they are in a ſtate of grace, and yet come ſhort of Heaven?

The reaſon is this, becauſe of their own ſelf-flattery and ſelf-deluſion; *They think themſelves ſomething when they are nothing, and ſo*

deceive themselves; they think themselves rich, and encreased in goods, and stand in need of nothing, whereas they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They think they have grace when indeed they have none; they think their Grace is true, when it is but counterfeit; they think their faith is true faith, when it is but fancy; they think their repentance is true repentance, when it is but worldly sorrow; they think their obedience is true obedience, when it is but hypocrisie. It may be they take civility for sanctity, and natural parts for true piety; it may be they take restraining grace for renewing grace, and so they are deceived in their spiritual estates. Thousands there are that deceive themselves in this particular.

Thirdly, It may be demanded, but how comes it to pass that it is possible for men to come near to Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven?

For answer to this; I shall give you but two reasons.

First, Men come near Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven, because they will not come up to the price; I do not mean the price of merit; I abhor that opinion, to think that we can merit Heaven; but my meaning is this, they do not come up to the price of means; though nothing can be done by way of merit, yet much must be done in the use of means; my meaning is, they will not do that which Jesus Christ would have them do, they will not suf-

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fer that which muſt be ſuffered, they will not forſake that which muſt be forſaken.

1. They will not do that which Jeſus Chriſt would have them do; for example, they will not walk exactly, they will not renew their repentance, they will not ſet about the work of God with all their might, and mind, and ſtrength, they will not work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling; there is much to be done, many duties to be done from a right principle, in a right manner, and to a right end.

2. They will not ſuffer that which is to be ſuffered; our Saviour ſaith, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his croſs and follow me:* You muſt be content to bear his croſs, as well as to wear his crown; Now this they will not do.

Againe, they will not forſake that which muſt be forſaken; our Saviour ſaith, a man muſt part with his right eye and right hand, any thing that ſtands in oppoſition to, or that comes in competition with him: Now men will not do, they will not ſuffer, they will not forſake what Chriſt would have them; It fares with them as with a pedling Chapman, who likes a commodity well, but he will not come up to the price of it; men are willing to do ſomething, but they will not do ſo much as is required, they will not proportion their labour according to their work, they will not make up the hedge according to the breach. This is certain; many there are that come

ſhort

short of Heaven, because they do not use the utmost of their endeavours, for the prosecution of the end; many came short of heaven, because of their slight endeavours in the way of Heaven, *Luk.* 13. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*; what is the reason? they only seek, but do not strive; It is not enough for you to seek to enter in at the strait gate, unless you strive, and you must strive as in an agony, so the word ἀγωνίζεσθε signifies in the Original.

Secondly, A second reason is this; Why some men come so neer Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven, is because of their Apostacy; they *begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh, they put their hands to the Plow and look back; you did run well, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?* Gal. 5. 7. You do not obey it constantly, you are not steady and firm to the truth, but you are starting aside like a broken bow; falling from the truth in their profession, and in their practice of Religion; These are the reasons why men come neer Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven; And thus I have proved the point in the three branches of it; Now what use shall we make of it?

The Use is this by way of Conviction; Oh what terrour may this strike into the hearts of all those who are onely Nominal Christians, that have a name onely to live, and in the mean time are dead, that have a form

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of godliness, but are as great strangers to the power of it, as Pagans are to the profession of it! Oh what terrour may this strike into the hearts of all you that come short of those that come short of Heaven; and if you come short of those that come short of heaven, what will become of you? For example, May a man be a frequenter of the Word of God? May a man make conscience of keeping the Sabbath? I mean for the external observation of it; May a man be a countenancer of Religion, and yet come short of Heaven? Then what will become of them that neglect Ordinances? What will become of them to whom the word of the Lord is a burden? *The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it*, Jer. 6. 10. And what will become of them that say of the service of the Lord, *What a wearineſs is it?* Mal. 1. 13. What a wearineſs is it to wait on God, and to hear Sermons? If a man may be a beleiver, and yet come short of Heaven, I mean a temporary beleiver, to beleive for a while; Then what will become of them that beleive not at all? believe none of the Precepts of God to obey them, nor the promises to embrace them, nor the threatnings to tremble at them; If a man have outward reformation, and yet come short of heaven, What then will become of them that have no reformation at all, that wallow in the mire of their sins? What will become of Liers, and Swearers, and Drunkards? The Pharisees were no friends to those gross sins, and

and yet they came short of heaven; O that this might awaken all those that are yet asleep in their sins, that are rockt in the Divels Cradle, and that do not understand their own conditions! May a man have natural parts and qualifications, and yet come short of Heaven? What will become of them that are sots in matters of Religion, that have not obtained to their A B C in Religion, but are ignorant of the fundamentals of Religion? May a man have some superficial tasts and beginnings of grace, and give his assent to the truths of the Gospel? May he receive the word of God with joy? May he be moved at a Sermon, and have a resolution to obey, and reform many things, and yet come short of Heaven? then how doleful and dreadful is their condition, that have no affection to, nor no delight in the Word of the Lord? that have no purposes of new and better obedience; but they come to hear the Word out of formality and custom, and not to get any spiritual advantage to their own souls: Oh! If this were seriously thought upon, it would make sinners to look about them, and to fall down at the feet of God, and to say, *Lord, what will become of me! Lord what will become of me!*

2. Use of Exhortation. I shall close this point with a word of Exhortation. If it is possible for many that profess the truth and true Religion, and are confident that they are in a state of grace, and seem to come very

neer to heaven, and yet for all that to come short of it; then as you love your God, as you love your souls, as you love your peace, as you desire to appear with comfort before your Judge, rest not in a bare outward profession, rest not in a naked name of Religion; Be not contented that you have lamps of profession, unless you have the Oyl of saving grace; consider, what advantage will it be for you to come neer to heaven, to come to the brow of the hill, as it were, and afterwards to drop down into hell! what advantage will it be for a man to be lifted up to heaven, and not lifted into heaven! it is the greatest curse that can possibly be expressed. O what a cutting corrosive, what a gnawing worme will this be to all eternity? for a man to say, *I came neer to Heaven, to the top of the Hill, and yet I fell short of those glorious hopes that are laid up for the Saints in light*; O what a stinging Cockatrice will this be to them that have but a bare naked name of Religion, an outward profession onely!

It may be thou art no swearer, nor Lier, nor Sabbath-breaker, but it may be thou art a covetous wretch, over-head and eares in the world, tumbling up and down in dirt and clay, as if there were no other happiness but here below; It may be thou art but a formal Christian; It may be thou art but a picture that hath hands and eyes, but no legs; it may be thou hast eyes, but no feet to run the ways of Gods Commandements; It may be, it may

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be said of some of you young men that hear me this day, what was said of the young man in the Gospel, *You are not far from the Kingdom of God*; what will this advantage you, if you do not follow Jesus Christ fully, and obey him sincerely, that you may enjoy him eternally! O that my counsel this day were accepted by you; in the fear of the Lord give no rest to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, until you can say, Blessed be God, I am more then the best hypocrite in the world; though he can outstrip me in shew, yet for the infide I outstrip him. But it may be you will say, What is this infide of Christianity, this essential of Religion, wherein you would have us outstrip hipocrites, and those that come short of heaven?

I will tell you in three words; To the essentials of Christianity, there are these three things required.

1. Union with Christ.
2. Renewing grace.
3. A Compliance with the Will of Christ.

First, Union with Christ; till you are united to him, you have no interest in him, nor benefit by him; therefore look to this, that you have the Spirit of God to unite you to the Lord Jesus Christ; Our Saviour saith, *Joh.* 15.4. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine, so neither can you bring forth fruit unless you abide in me.* O Labour for this Union; when the soul is once united to him, then it hath communion with him,

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in his life, in his death, in his reſurrection, in his interceſſion, in his graces, and comforts and all. What is that which knits the Ciſtern to the Fountain? you know it is the Leaden Pipe, that is it that is the conveyance from the conduit head to the Ciſtern; ſo here, What is it that knits thy ſoul to Jeſus Chriſt, that thou mayſt be continually partaking of him, who is the Fountain of light, and life, and peace, and conſolation? What is it but this pipe? the Union that is between Chriſt and the ſoul. Now a hypocrite hath not this Union; he is not united to Chriſt; it may be he bears the name of Chriſt, but never was ingrafted into him; it may be he is tyed to Chriſt by the thread of an outward profeſſion, as the *Scions* is tied to the ſtock, but yet he is not ingrafted into the ſtock.

Secondly, It conſiſts in renewing grace. *If any man be in Chriſt he is a new creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. An Hypocrite may have many trinkets and bables, as we ſay; I, but a Regenerate man, he brings forth one Jewel worth ten thouſands of them; An Hypocrite may have reſtraining grace; but a truely Regenerate man, he is renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, he hath a new name, which I ſpake off in ſo many Sermons, the white ſtone, and the new name, *Rev.* 3.

Thirdly, This eſſence of Chriſtianity, conſiſts in a total complyance with the Will of Chriſt; he that is a true beleiver, a truely regenerate man, an inſide Chriſtian, he can ſay, *Lord*,

Lord, not my will, but thy will be done; Lord, Rule in me as thou pleaseſt, ſo I may be but thine, take poſſeſſion of my heart, and diſpoſſeſs ſin and Satan; he will ſay, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.*

But now an Hypocrite, it may be he gives up his name to Jeſus Chriſt in profeſſion, but he doth not give up his heart to Chriſt in ſubjection and ſubmiſſion; it is one thing to give up the name to Chriſt, and an other thing to give up the heart to Chriſt; when you give up the key of the Caſtle to Chriſt then you will ſay, *Lord, I will do what thou wouldſt have me do, and ſuffer what thou wouldſt have me ſuffer, and forſake what thou wouldſt have me forſake; there is nothing I have, though it be as dear to me as my right hand, and right eye, but I will part with it at thy command.*

To ſhut up all, if you would not come ſhort of them that come ſhort of Heaven, then reſt not in a bare profeſſion, in a bare naked name of Chriſtianity; labour to be united to Chriſt, labour for renewing grace, labour to give up your ſelves to Jeſus Chriſt, let there be a complyance in your will to the will of Chriſt.

Again, If many may be confident that they are in a ſtate of grace, and yet come ſhort of heaven, O then take heed of ſelf-deluſion, and ſelf-flattery, to think your ſelves ſomething when you are nothing, and ſo deceive your own ſouls; It is better a thouſand times for a man to think himſelf nothing when he

is something, then to think himself something when he is nothing; saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly then they all, and yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* Beg earnestly of God that you may know the worst of your selves, and the best of Jesus Christ, and pray, *O Lord, let me not be deceived in this great business of eternity, let me not go to hell, with vain hopes of Heaven.*

Thirdly, May a man come neer to heaven, and yet come short of it? O then take heed of these two sins, Slothfulness and Apostacy.

Take heed of Slothfulness, *Be not Slothfull in business: but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,* Rom. 12. 11. *The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force,* Mat. 11. 12. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;* set to the work with all your might, put your whole strength to the work; shake off all drowsiness and dulness.

And then take heed of Apostacy, this makes many that come neer to Heaven, to come short of Heaven, because they do not hold out to the end; *he that endures to the end shall be saved;* blessed are they who notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements, that they meet with in Heavens way, are resolved to hold out to the end, and in the end. Thus I have dispatcht the first Doctrine, That it is possible for many that profess the truth, and are confident that they are in a State of Grace, and seem to come neer to heaven,

and yet for all that to come short of Heaven.

Now I come to the second Doctrine in this last branch of the Text, from these words, *Come short of it.* And the Doctrine is this;

To come short of eternal rest, is such an invaluable and unconceiveable, and irrecoverable loss, that it is to be trembled at, by all sorts of persons whatsoever.

It is a loss to be trembled at by all those that have not quite lost their sense and feeling; for the confirmation of this truth, there are these two queries I shall speak to.

First, *What it is to come short of this eternal rest.*

Secondly, *How it may appear that this coming short of heaven, is such an invaluable, irrecoverable, and unconceiveable loss.*

For the first, *What it is to come short of this eternal rest*; What is it? Oh! God grant that neither you, nor I, nor any soul here present, may ever experimentally know what it is to come short of Gods eternal rest; let me shew you what it is, that you may avoid this dreadful danger; The Original word here used, is ὑστερῆσαι, and it signifies to come too late, just as those five foolish Virgins that had no Oyl in their lamps, they came and knockt, *Lord, Lord,* said they, *open to us*; but the door of mercy was shut, they came too late, *Mat.* 25. 10, 11. It signifies likewise to fail of that which

which a man expects, *Heb.* 12. 15. *Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God.* Or it signifies this, for a man to miss the goale, or prize that he runs for, and so it is a Metaphor from runners in a race; if they be heavy, or lumpish, or careless, they lose the prize, they miss the goale; So Christians that are secure, and careless, and sloathful, and mind every thing more then that one thing that is necessary; they come too late, they fail of grace and glory, they miss the goal, they lose the prize, they are deprived of that eternal happiness they expected, this is to come short of this eternal rest.

Secondly, It may be demanded, *How will it appear that this coming short of eternal rest, is such an invaluable, unconceiveable, and irrecoverable loss that it is to be trembled at?*

I Answer, It will appear by these three reasons.

They that come short of Heaven, they lose
1. The Presence
2. The Favour
3. The Fruition
Of God in eternal happiness.

First, They that come short of this eternal rest, they lose the presence of God; how great, how unconceiveably great this loss is, it passeth my skill to tell you? But conceive it thus; *David* tells us, in *Psal.* 16. *ult. In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand*

are pleasures for evermore. Now, if in the presence of God be the fulness of joy, then certainly in the want of his presence is the fulness of misery: *If at his right hand are pleasures for evermore, then certainly at his left hand is woe, and misery, and calamity for evermore;* even such misery as the Prophet *Ezekiel* speaks of, *Ezek. 2. ult. A roll of a book was written within and without, lamentations, and mourning, and woe;* and it stands with reason it should be so; for if God be light, then a separation from God must needs be darkness; if God be life, then a separation from God must needs be death; If God be the fountain of all bliss, then the separation from him must needs be the possession of all misery, and woe, and calamity, and distress, that can possibly be expressed or conceived: This punishment of loss, in the opinion of all Divines, doth incomparably torment the soul, more then all the punishment and tortures, and torments of Hell-fire; Nay, the loss of that heavenly and unconceivable joy, the loss of one hours communion with the crowned Saints in glory, the loss of one glimps of the glorified body of Jesus Christ, is a greater and far more and considerable loss, then the loss of all the Kingdoms of the world besides; I know that carnal men have very carnal conceits of heaven and happiness, because they look usually upon heaven and spiritual things with carnal eyes; but if they did but look upon them with such an eye as *Moses* did, of whom it is said, *Heb.* 11. 27. *by*

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the eye of faith he saw him that was invisible: if they would not look upon things that are seen, but upon things that are not seen; *For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are spiritual and eternal*, as saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. If they could but look upon them with spiritual eyes, then they would acknowledge, that a thousand thousand rendings of the body from the soul, are far less then one rending of the soul from God. It was the speech of one *Nicostratus* a curious Painter, to one that admired at him for looking so wishfully upon a curious Picture; *Oh*, said he, *if thou hadst but my eyes, thou wouldst admire what I admire*; so may I say to men that will not now believe, that the loss of Gods presence is such a loss; hadst thou but spiritual eyes, thou wouldst acknowledge the truth of what I now say, That the loss of Gods presence is such a loss as can never, never be sufficiently bewailed, no not with tears of blood; It was the speech of *Chrysostom*, and it was a savoury speech; *I had rather endure a thousand Hells, then to hear that one dreadful sentence, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*: And suitable to this was the speech of *Augustine*; *I could be contented to endure the torments of Hell for a while, so I might but see the glorified body of Jesus Christ in Heaven*; for you know what our Saviour saith, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given*

me, John 17. 24. The sight of Christs glory in Heaven, is that which makes heaven to be Heaven; It was a good speech of *Luther*, *Heaven without Gods presence, would be but as a Box without a Jewel.* Now if this Beatifical Vision, as it is called, the beholding of the glory of Christ in Heaven, be such a happiness, Oh, what is it to be excluded and thrust out from the glorified presence of Christ, never to see his face! You know when St. *Paul* told the Disciples at *Ephesus*, *Act.* 20. 25, 38. *And now behold, that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.* This cut them to the heart, this occasioned so much sorrowing and sadness, because he said, *You shall see my face no more*: Now if that were matter of so much sadness, never to see the Apostles face more; Oh, what will it be, when Jesus Christ shall say to such a one, Thou shalt never see my face; go thou cursed wretch, get thee away from me, go to Hell, to the Devil and damned spirits; there, there, shall be thy portion for ever and ever! This is the first Reason, to shew how invaluable, how unconceivable this loss is; the coming short of Heaven is the loss of Gods presence.

2. The second Reason is this; They that come short of Heaven, as they lose the presence of God, so they lose the favour, love, mercy and compassion of God; the favour of God is better then life, *Psal.* 63. 3. *Because thy loving kindness is better then life, my lips shall praise*

preise thee; because when this life is gone, the favour of God towards his Elect will last to all eternity, therefore it is better then life; but they that come short of heaven, lose this favour of God; all pity, all mercy, all compassion, all hope of favour shall then be utterly taken away; God will be so far from shewing favour to them, that *he will laugh at their destruction, and mock when their fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon them*, as it is *Pro.* 1. 26, 27. they shall lose not only the favour of God, but the favour of all their friends that they have enjoyed here upon the earth; they shall lose the favour of their fathers and mothers, of husbands and wives, and children and bosom friends; for although they were nearly related to them, yet if they come to heaven, and themselves excluded, those glorified Saints that are in heaven will abandon them with detestation and derision; nay, they will rejoyce in their destruction, and in the execution of Gods justice and vengeance upon them, *Psal.* 58. 10. *The righteous shall rejoyce when he seeth the vengeance*; a glorified father in Heaven shall rejoyce in the destruction and condemnation of a damned son; a glorified yoke-fellow in Heaven shall rejoyce in the destruction and damnation of such a yoke-fellow as is condemned: No prayers, no tears, no sobs nor supplications, no cryings to the mountains to fall upon them, shall one whit avail; there shall be no Mediator, none in heaven or earth to plead for them, or to

speak one word on their behalfs; This is the second Reason, They that come short of heaven, lose the favour of God.

3. They that come short of Heaven, as they lose the presence of *God*, & the favour of God, so they lose the fruition of God, the enjoyment of God in eternal happiness; they lose *a crown that is incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away, that is reserved for the Saints in light*; they lose an inheritance, an everlasting inheritance: If the loss of an earthly comfort (suppose it be of a dear Wife, or hopeful Child, or a bosom Friend, or an outward Estate of an Inheritance of a thousand pounds a year, if the loss of a stately House, or the loss of a rich ship at Sea) doth many times so affect a man that it goes to his very heart; you know what *Jacob* said, *If* Benjamin *be taken away*, my dearly beloved son *Benjamin*, then said he, *shall I go to my grave mourning; my gray hairs will be brought with sorrow to the grave*, Gen. 42. 38. If an earthly loss, the loss of an earthly comfort, do so affect and afflict a man, O what will the loss of an everlasting Kingdom, of everlasting Glory, of everlasting Happiness, of those everlasting Pleasures that are at the right hand of God, *which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive*; O how will this loss torture and torment the soul, and make such a one cry out in anguish and extream bitterness, Oh cursed beast that I was, to me was the Gospel preacht in power and purity, I lived in a City where hea-

heavenly *Manna* was droping down every day, on the week day as well as on the Lords day, to me was Jesus Christ profered in all his beauty and imbroidery; nay, the Ministers of the Gospel did wo me, intreat me, invite me, and beseech me, as if Jesus Christ himself had been upon his knees beseeching me to be reconciled; to me was salvation tendred, but I neglected all, I slighted all, and now must I for ever endure those torments that might have been escaped, and must for ever be deprived of those joys that might have been gained; I might have been what now I am not; O that I might be any thing rather then what now I am; O that I might be a toad, or a serpent, or any thing, or nothing! The consideration therefore of this loss, the loss of happiness, the loss of such a happiness, the loss of an eternal happiness, will rend the caul of their hearts in a thousand thousand pieces; the tears of hell will not be sufficient to bewail the loss of Heaven, especially if you take in but these three aggravations of this loss.

1. They that lose this eternal happiness, shall look upon others that have gained it; they shall look upon the Saints and Servants of Christ, that are now in joy in that unconceiveable glory, whereof themselves come short, and this will be an eternal corrosive to their consciences; so saith our Saviour, *Luk.* 13. 28. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God,*

God, and you your selves thrust out; All the blessed Saints and Servants of God, received into Heaven, and themselves shut out; that is one aggravation.

2. Take in this aggravation also, that this loss of eternal happiness, is ever accompanied with the punishment of sense; if it were onely a punishment of loss, it was a dreadful punishment; but the punishment of loss never goes alone; they that lose Heaven, must have Hell for their portion, they must have those unconceiveable tortures and torments, which infinitely surpass the capacity and comprehension of such poor creatures as we are; Alass! we know not what it is to lye under the burden of Gods wrath, when Mountains and Millstones of wrath are thrown upon the soul, and the Lord will so far enable the soul, that it shall be bearing that wrath, and bearing, and bearing it to all eternity.

3. Take in this aggravation also. This loss it is irrecoverable; once lost and ever lost, Heaven once lost will never, never, be recovered; after as many millions of years as there are drops in the Ocean, that loss will still be bewailed, and bewailed, and bewailed to all eternity. If you put all these together, I believe you will assent to me now, and acknowledge the truth of this point; *That to come short of heaven is such an invaluable, and unconceiveable, and irrecoverable loss, that it is to be trembled at by all sorts of persons whatsoever*; For the use of this point,

First,

First by way of Information.
Secondly, By way of Exhortation.

First, By way of Information, it shews us the extream folly and madness of all impenitent sinners, who will venture the loss of God, and the favour of God; the loss of Christ and the presence of Christ; the loss of Heaven and happiness, and the loss of their own souls, rather then they will lose the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season; it is such a madness, that heaven and earth may stand amazed at it; consider, and befool your selves, O you carnal and careless ones, if you have not sinned away your very sense and reason also; Consider, blush, and be ashamed, and be confounded in the presence of the Lord this day; you that never yet set your faces towards heaven, you that never made it your business to look out for a Christ, you that never shed a penitential tear from a broken heart, you that cannot abide to think of humiliation and repentance, you that never sought for eternal happiness by patient continuance in well doing, you that know not what it is to mortifie a lust, you that know not what it is to deny your own hearts any thing, to cross your own wills in any thing, you that are so far from working out your salvation with fear and trembling, that you work out your own damnation without fear and trembling, without horrour and astonishment, that never once think of it, that never once lay to heart this loss, this com-

comming short, I cannot, if I had the tongue of men and Angels, I were never able to expresse the evil of comming short of eternal happinesse; you can now sell glory for vanity; Heaven for Earth; the pleasures that are at the right hand of God, for the pleasures of sin that are but for a season: But the time will come, when with heart rending complaint, you will tear off your own hair, and rend your own hearts in peices, And cry out, O fools, beastly fools, senslesse sots that we were, to bereave our selves of eternal happinesse, for a little momentany pleasures, for the satisfaction of a base lust! O what Bedlams, O what humane beasts were we, that would deprive our selves of mansions in the new *Jerusalem*, for a few brutish carnal sensual delights! O what mad men were we, that would venture the loss of an eternal habitation, in that place, where to be and to be most happy is all one, rather then we would cross our own carnal and corrupt wills in any thing, but we would fulfil the flesh, and the mind! O how, will you then exceedingly befool your selves; It is stored of *Lysimachus* a King, being pursued by his enemies, and being very thirsty, he sold his Kingdom for a draught of drink, but afterward he cried out, Alas, what a bargain have I made, to sell my Kingdom for a draught of drink! O this, even this, is the condition of all you that sell heaven for earth, that sell Pearls for peoles, that sell your immortal souls, that sell the hopes of eternal happinesse, for the satisfaction

satisfaction of a base lust; O how will you cry out; What a bedlam beast have I been, that have run such a hazzard, the loss of such a Crown, an incorruptible Crown, such a Crown of eternal glory! O what a beast have I been, that have ventured the loss of heaven, and the favour of God, and the presence of God, and the loss of my own soul, and that for nothing, for toys and trifles, for dross and trash! You can now complain of the service of God, and say, It is an unprofitable service: *What profit is it to wait upon the Lord, what profit is it that we kept his Ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 3.14. But a time will come, when you will wish that a thousand years had been spent in fasting, and ten thousand thousand years had been spent in the strictest exercise of Religion, rather then you should have come short of that eternal happiness: you now are ready to say, when we Ministers press you to pray in your families, and catechize your families, and read the Scriptures in your families, and to drive a trade for Heaven, when we press you to these things, you are ready to say, We have no leasure, alas we cannot look after these things, we have no time to seek heaven and happiness: No time! well, well you that can find no time to look after those things that are of infinite concernment, you that have no time to seek for Heaven, you will have time enough to bewail the loss of heaven, when a thousand years are gone, and ten thou-

sand

sand years are gone, and a thousand, thousand, thousand years are gone in bewailing your loss, bewailing this unconceiveable damage, and detriment; when as many millions of years are gone as there are drops of water in the Ocean, there will be time enough to bewail it to all eternity; O the folly and madness of all those that will live in sin, and lie in sin, and for the pleasures of sin will venture the loss of those pleasures that are at the right hand of God for evermore! it is such madness as cannot be expressed or conceived; That is one Use.

Secondly, By way of Exhortation; And I have two Exhortations to tender to you, if God would give you but hearts to hearken; and the Lord of his infinite mercy bow and incline your hearts to consider what I say.

First, if the comming short of this eternal rest, be such an unconceiveable loss; Then, foresee this danger, and tremble at it, tremble at the apprehension of it; if you be flesh and blood tremble at it; Think with your selves, Certainly there will come a day, when a final sentence must pass upon my soul; either a sentence of absolution, or a sentence of condemnation; if the sentence of condemnation, *depart from me thou cursed wretch, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Divel and his Angels*, Matth. 25. 41. If that should be the final sentence that should pass upon me, what would become of me! As God speaks

to

to the unrighteous Judge, *Isaiah* 10. 3. *And what will you do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which will come from far? to whom will ye flee for help?* So say I to thee; what wilt thou do in the day when that sentence passeth upon thee? whether wilt thou flee for help? O the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, that this coming short of heaven will produce; especially when thou shalt consider, that God was every day dealing with thee, stretching out his hand to have gathered thee, and to have converted thee, and to have brought thee home, but thou wouldst not! Jesus Christ offered me a plaister of his own heart blood to heal me, but I trampled it under foot; the Spirit of God was knocking at the door of my heart, sometimes by the hammer of the Law, and sometimes by the hammer of the Gospel; the Spirit of God was hindering me from sin, and was stirring up holy motions in my heart, and those I quenched; the Ministers of the Gospel they prest hard upon me to yield to those warnings, frequent warnings that were tendred to me; but the Ministers I despised, and I mockt the messengers of God, which he sent to me to warn me not to come into this place of torment: O the horrible, hellish, hideous cryes, the fearful and doleful screetches, roarings and yellings, that these considerations will fetch from thee; when thou shalt consider that thou hast not obeyed the Gospel, thou hast not known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace; but

thou

thou hast wilfully lost such a crown, such a Kingdom, such happiness, as will be matter of heart-tormenting sorrow and mourning, to all eternity; if the loss of the Ark, which was but a type of Gods presence, 1 Sam. 4. 18, 19, 20. was so terrible to that good old man *Eli*, that he fell down and brake his neck when he heard of the loss of it; and to that good woman *Phinehas* in her Travel, when the Ark was lost, that she cryed out, *The glory is departed from Israel*! O what then think you will be the loss of Gods presence, the loss of his favour, the loss of eternal happiness, the loss of this Crown and Kingdom which I have been speaking of! Oh how will this make such damned wretches cry out in extream bitterness, The glory, the kingdom, the happiness, the glory, the everlasting glory is departed from me, and I must never see the face of God any more! This is the first Exhortation; foresee this evil and tremble at it.

My second Exhortation is this; Do not only foresee this danger, but study with the utmost endeavours of your souls to prevent it; prevent it, you will say, How must I do that? I will tell you that, if God will but give you hearts to follow my counsel.

First, Be sure to avoid those sins that clog, and hamper, and fetter thee as it were in the way to heaven, so that thou canst not with any patience run the race that is set before thee; such as these, pride presumption, unbelief, apostacy, earthlinesse, selfishness, security and sensuality: O these are the sins that fester thee

and

and hamper thee, away with them therefore.

Secondly, Pluck up thy feet, and resolve to run the ways of Gods Commandements; pray with *David*, that God would *enlarge your hearts that you may run in the way of his commandements*. Psal. 119. 32. He doth not beg that the way may be made large, but that his heart may be enlarged, *I will walk in the way of thy commandements*, though it be never so narrow, though there be never so many crosses in it, or thorns, or difficulties, or discouragements; *if thou wilt but enlarge my heart, I will run in the ways of thy commandements*.

Thirdly, Take heed of delays and procrastination, of putting it off from day to day, by saying there will be time enough hereafter; it will be time enough for me to look after heaven, when I have got enough of the world; If I do it the last year of my life, in the last moneth of the last year, in the last week of the last month, it will serve; O take heed of delays; this putting off repentance, hath ruined thousands of souls; shun that pit whereinto many have fallen, shun that rock upon which many have suffered ship-wrack; say with *David*, *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandements*, Psa. 119. 60.

Fourthly, Look upon the Crown of glory set before thee; have the goale in thy eye, just as *Moses* had; he endured the frownes of *Pharoah* on the one hand, and he scorned the flateries and riches of *Ægypt* on the other hand; Why, because he had an eye to the recompence

of reward; O look upon the Crown and white robe, and let this quicken you.

Fifthly, Be sure thou hold out unto the end; if thou wouldst not come short of Heaven, be not like many runners in a race, that sit down in the midst of the way; *Be thou faithful unto the death*, saith our Saviour to the Church of *Smyrna*; Rev. 2. 10. *and I will give thee a Crown of life*; *He that endures to the end shall be saved*, Mat. 24. 13. therefore, *be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*; abhor Apostacy as much as thou wouldst abhor Hell it self.

Now to press this Exhortation upon you, take these Motives.

First, If you have but willing minds, it is accepted of God; so saith the Apostle, *for if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. If thou usest the utmost endeavour of thy soul, the Lord will help thee; If thou faint, he will support thee; if thou overcome, he will crown thee.

Secondly, Consider, that among runners in a race here on earth, there is but one that will get the goale; I, but here in the race of Christianity, if thou do but so run, thou mayest obtain, *if thou do not sit down, if thou art not weary of well-doing*; *If thou by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and immortality, there is eternal life for thee, thou shalt have a Crown of glory*; Nay, there are ten thousand,

ſand, thouſand crowns in heaven; The Lord Chriſt will give every one a Crown, that holds out to the end, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day.*

But why doth he call it a Crown of righteouſneſs?

Anſwer, It is called a crown of righteouſneſs, becauſe it is a Crown purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, and a Crown that is promiſed: Now ſaith the Apoſtle, this righteous Crown, or this Crown of righteouſneſs, is laid up for me, and not onely for me; there is not onely one Crown and one Kingdom for me, but it is laid up for all thoſe that love the appearing of the Lord Chriſt. O this glorious Maſter, he makes every one of his ſervants to be crowned Kings, *He hath made us Kings unto God*, Rev. 1. 6.

Thirdly, Conſider the time of running is but ſhort, but the time of your reward will be eternal, if you do not come ſhort of this eternal reſt, but hold out, and run to the end of the race; If you can but ſay with the Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have been faithful unto the death; I have not wickedly departed from my God*, as *David* ſpeaks, *Pſa.* 18. 21. If you be not Apoſtates, but hold out to the end, know that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. O the unconceiveable reward, O the invaluable and unconceiveable bliſs of all thoſe

that come to this eternal rest! the tongue of men and Angels is not able to express it. I beseech you on the one side, fear the loss of it, and on the other side, let the consideration of that eternal happiness, quicken you to do the utmost of your endeavours to attain it; If you had ten thousand lives to spend in the service of God, if you had ten thousand estates to lay down at his feet, if you could do as much as all the Apostles did, and all the Martyrs did or suffered, let me tell you, the fruition of Jesus Christ one day in glory, will recompence it all; The Lord work these things upon our hearts, that every one of us here present may fear exceedingly and continually, lest a promise being left of entring into his rest, we should forsake the promise, and by forsaking the promise, should come short of eternal happiness.

Rev.

The Persevering Saint
the crowned Saint

Rev. 3. 11.

Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown.

THe seven famous Churches of *Asia*, mentioned in the three first Chapters of this Book of *Revelations*, had this honour put upon them, to have seven Epistles sent unto them immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ himself; and as they were the glory of the world, while they stood fast to God and to his truth, so were they after their declining from God and his truth, made the monuments of his anger and indignation. The words I have now read unto you, are part of the sixt Epistle written from the Lord Jesus Christ to the Church of *Philadelphia*; wherein, as he was a faithful witness, and one that knew their spiritual estate better then they knew it themselves, therefore he sets down in his Epistle something by way of { Commendation, Consolation, Exhortation.

Something is set down here by way of Com-

mendation, in *ver.* 8. *I know thy works, behold I have ſet before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it*; by open door may be meant, either a free and full liberty and opportunity of ſpreading the Goſpel, as the Apoſtle uſes that phraſe, 1 *Cor.* 16. 9. *For a great door and effectual is opened to me, and there are many adverſaries*; or elſe by open door may be meant a door of hope in reference to eternity; that door of heaven that ſin had ſhut againſt us, is by the merit of Jeſus Chriſt opened to us: Oh, bleſſed are they that have this door opened to them by Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Door, the Way, the Truth and the Life; but ſayes he, *Thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denyed my name*: This is by way of Commendation; though ſhe had but a little ſtrength, yet becauſe ſhe improved it, and did not deny the name of Chriſt, was not an apoſtate Church, this our Saviour puts upon her account of Commendation.

2. Here is ſomething alſo by way of Conſolation, in *ver.* 9, 10. *Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which ſay they are Jews and are not*; (that is, I will diſcover their hypocriſie, I will make them known to be what they are, and reveal to whom they do belong) *I will make them to come and worſhip before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee*; that is, I will ſubdue thy enemies under thy feet, and let them know that I have loved thee; and in *ver.* 10. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the*

the hour of temptation which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth: Here is marvellous comfort; Jeſus Chriſt never brings his children into a wilderneſs, but he goes with them; when they go through the fire and through the water, he will be with them; *I will keep thee, and I will uphold thee*, ſayes he.

Then in the third place, Here is ſomething by way of Exhortation in the words of the Text; *Behold I come quickly, hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy Crown*: In which words there are two things conſiderable;

1. A duty preſſed.
2. Motives expreſſed.

The duty preſſed, is conſtancy and perſeverance, *Hold faſt that which thou haſt.* The motives expreſſed are two; the one is drawn from the ſuddenneſs of Chriſts coming to judgement, *Behold I come quickly*; the other is taken from the danger of loſing their Crown ſet before them, *That no man take thy Crown.*

1. For the duty preſſed, *Hold faſt that thou haſt*; keep it with might and main, uſe thy utmoſt endeavour to keep what thou haſt: What was that this Church had which Chriſt exhorts to hold faſt? It had both the profeſſion and poſſeſſion of true Religion: Now this true Religion conſiſted in two things, in purity of Doctrine, and in holineſs of Life and Converſation, both theſe this Church had; ſhe had purity of Doctrine, as I ſhewed you out

of ver. 8. *Thou haſt kept my Word, and haſt not denyed my Name*; thou haſt kept my Word. Then for holineſs of Converſation, ſhe had not denyed Chriſts Name in the midſt of perſecution; *Thou haſt kept the word of my patience*; Now ſayes our Saviour, that which thou haſt, that true Religion thou profeſſeſt, maintain and keep, and hold faſt againſt all oppoſition, both in profeſſion and practice; hold faſt the truth thou haſt embraced, and hold faſt the grace that thou haſt received: So then the Doctrine I ſhall commend to you hence, is this;

Doct. *That Chriſtians muſt hold faſt both the truth and the grace they have received, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance.*

There are two branches in this Doctrine, which we might make two Propoſitions.

The firſt this;

That Chriſtians muſt hold faſt the truths they have received, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance.

The ſecond this;

That Chriſtians muſt hold faſt the grace they have received, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance.

I begin with the firſt, *That Chriſtians muſt hold faſt the truths they have received, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance.* For the proof of this, conſider that place, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus*;

the

the word is ὑποτύπωσις, that model, or that plat-form of Goſpel truths, thoſe Fundamental truths which the Apoſtle had wrapt up in a bundle to be received and embraced; ſo *Tit.* 1. 9. *Holding faſt the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by ſound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince gain-ſayers*; holding faſt the faithful word; as adverſaries pluck one way, ſo do you pluck another way, ſtriving earneſtly for the faith of the Goſpel; ſo *Heb.* 10, 23. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promiſed*, Prov. 4. 13. *Take faſt hold of inſtruction, let her not go, keep her, for ſhe is thy life*, Prov. 23. 23. *Buy the truth, and ſell it not*; buy it at any rate, ſell it at no rate: thus you ſee this duty commanded; ſee it commended in one example moſt remarkable and imitable, becauſe it was in the pureſt times, the primitive time of the Church, *Act.* 2. 42. *And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

For the better explication of this Point, it may be demanded,

1. How muſt Chriſtians hold faſt the truth they have received?

2. Why muſt Chriſtians hold faſt the truth they have received?

Firſt, How muſt Chriſtians hold faſt the truth they have received?

I Anſwer;

They muſt hold it faſt theſe three ways:

In

In their { Memories, Affections, Practice and Converſations.

1. They muſt hold faſt the truth in their Memories, *Heb.* 2. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip*; we ſhould learn of the bleſſed Virgin *Mary*, of whom it is ſaid, That *ſhe kept all theſe things, and pondered them in her heart*, Luk. 2. 19. It is not the great getter, but the great ſaver that becomes the rich man; it is not the hearing, but the keeping of truths that will make us ſpiritually rich.

2. We muſt hold faſt the truth in our Affections, we muſt cleave to the truth in love and liking; thus did *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 31. *I have ſtuck unto thy teſtimonies, O Lord, put me not to ſhame*; and in *ver.* 20. *My ſoul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy Judgements at all times*; *O how love I thy Law! it is my meditation all the day.* Ver. 97. and ver. 167. of the ſame Pſalm, *My ſoul hath kept thy teſtimonies, and I love them exceedingly.* On the contrary, when men have not a ſincere love to the truth, they loſe both the truth and their own ſouls too, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10, 11. *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved*; *and for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe a lye, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had*

had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs. This is the caſe of many Papiſts and Atheiſts at this day; they are drawn away to believe lyes, lying miracles, lying doctrines; when God ſees men careleſs and remiſs in their love to the truth, he ſayes to ſuch careleſs wretches, Take him Jeſuit, take him Satan, bind him and blind him, and lead him to deſtruction. Hence are all thoſe frequent Exhortations which are ſcattered up and down in the Scripture, to love wiſdom, underſtanding and inſtruction, *Pro.* 3. 3. *My ſon, forget not my Law, but let thine heart keep my Commandements; let not mercy and truth forſake thee, bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart;* Prov. 4. 6. *Forſake not wiſdom, and ſhe ſhall preſerve thee; love her, and ſhe ſhall keep thee;* Prov. 7. 4. *Say unto wiſdom thou art my ſiſter, and call underſtanding thy kinſwoman.* What a man loves, that he will keep carefully; if he loves a Jewel, he will be careful to preſerve it; if he loves a Picture, he will be careful not to deface it; a man will part with that laſt which he loves beſt.

3. Hold faſt the truth, not only in Memory and Affection, but likewiſe hold faſt the truth in Practice and Converſation; you ſhould yield conſcionable ſubjection to every known truth, without holding any one part of the truth in unrighteouſneſs; the more a man practiſeth what he knows, the more he ſhall know what to practiſe. *John* 7. 17. *If any man will do his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.*

True

True knowledge is the mother of obedience, but obedience is the nurſe of knowledge; when a Scholar hath well taken out one leſſon, it is an encouragement to a Maſter to teach him another; certainly if we would practiſe more, we ſhould know more; *The ſecrets of the Lord are with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant*, Pſal. 25. 14. Look as the Widows oyl by laying it out was encreaſed, ſo knowledge laid out in practice is put forth to advantage; therefore put forth every known truth into practice; this is the way to hold faſt the truth you have received.

The ſecond *Query* by way of Explication is this; But why muſt Chriſtians hold faſt the the truth they have received, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance?

The Reaſons are theſe;

Firſt, Becauſe the truth hath many enemies to oppoſe it, corrupt it, gainſay it, maligne it, deface it and diſgrace it; though truth cannot be aſhamed, yet it is many times blamed; Jeſus Chriſt himſelf had not more enemies upon earth then his truth hath at this day; yea, our bleſſed Saviour had the more enemies, becauſe he did bear witneſs to the truth, *John* 8. 40. *But now you ſeek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not* Abraham: That was the great quarrel they had againſt our Saviour, becauſe he told them the truth; now as Jeſus Chriſt, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, was

oppoſed

opposed, so will his truth be opposed to the end of the world.

First, The Divel he is a grand enemy to the truth; that Prince of Darkness would not willingly have one Lamp of the Sanctuary unblown out: the most of his rage is against the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, who hold forth the word of truth to Gods people.

Secondly, Ignorant, unbeleiving, Atheistical wretches, that count preaching foolishness, that will be ready to undervalue it.

Thirdly, subtile and undermining Preists and Jesuites, those froggs out of the bottomless pit, they will endeavour to corrupt it.

Fourthly, Scandalous Protestants, which bring not forth fruit, these will cast an aspersion and scandal upon the truth; therefore, because of these enemies, Christians should hold forth the truth they have received; that's the first reason.

Secondly, The second reason is this; truth is worth the holding fast, because we have many blessed priviledges by it; as for Example;

1. The truth of the Gospel is our cap of Maintenance; it is the charter of our Priviledges, it is the evidence of our everlasting inheritance, *Thy Testimonies have I claimed for my heritage*, saith *David*; And will you not keep your evidences for a good inheritance?

2. Here is an other priviledge; if you will keep the truth, you may be sure the truth will keep you; as we say of a Tradesman, *If he will*

will keep his Shop, his Shop will keep him; The truth will be your Shield and Buckler, if you keep it, to defend you againſt all gainſayers, *Pſa.* 91. 4. *He ſhall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings ſhalt thou truſt,* his truth ſhall be thy Shield and Buckler; hold faſt the faith, and that will hold you up; the Apoſtle bids us in one place, to *ſtand faſt in the faith,* Rom. 11. 20. and in an other place, *by faith we ſtand,* 2 Cor. 1. 24. from both thoſe places together, you may gather thus much, when we ſtand in it, then we ſtand by it; when we ſtand faſt in the faith, then we ſhall be ſure to be eſtabliſhed by the faith, againſt all oppoſitions.

Thirdly, The holding faſt the truth, will yeild and afford you the ſweeteſt joy and comfort upon your death-beds. What was that made St. *Paul* rejoyce at death? 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith*; He had not let go his hold; this was the ground of his joy and hope; when he was *ready to be offered, and his departure was at hand.*

Fourthly, the truth of the Goſpel is a Teſtament ſealed with the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, wherein ſo many precious, rich, and royal Legacyes are bequeathed unto us, by the Teſtator, our bleſſed Mediator, our deareſt friend, that hath redeemed us with his own precious blood; Now, ſhall we not look after the proving of the Will of this bleſſed Teſtator? So much for the Explication.

Now

Now for the Application of this point; And the

First Use is by way of reproof; does not this Doctrine justly and sharply reprove the unconstancy and unsetledness of many Professors at this day? doth it not meet them as the Angel did *Baalam*, with a drawn Sword of a sharp reproof? O that this reproof might take hold on those that are concerned this day; you know we read that Passage this day, '*what went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind?* No, *John Baptist* was not a reed, but a rock; But alas, look upon Professours at this day, and we have more Reeds then Rocks; we have more falling then fixed Stars; More children that are carried about with every wind of Doctrine (*Eph.* 4. 14.) then men setled, rooted, and stablished in the present truth, that are constant in nothing but in unconstancy; are there not some that can be content to part with Religion, and let truth go, and Gospel priviledges go, and all go, so they may but enjoy their trades and professions, their places and preferments, (though I hope better things of many of you that hear me this day,) will not the Lord think you, sharply rebuke such in his anger? will he not speak to them in his hot displeasure? What, have I given you the Gospel, such precious truths, and do you slight them! do you trample them under feet! do you prefer the puddles of Popery, before these wholsome

streams

ſtreams, and clear fountain of truth? Well, if the Goſpel be a burthen to you, I will eaſe you of your burthen; and how doleful would this be, if God ſhould ſay, the priviledges you are weary of ſhall be taken from you, you ſhall be eaſed of them!

Uſe 2. Therefore give me leave in the Name of Chriſt, and in the cauſe of the Goſpel, to beſeech you to hold faſt that which you have received; hold faſt the truth againſt error, hold faſt the truth of the Proteſtant Religion, againſt Popery and Popiſh Innovations and Superſtitions; this I forewarn you of, the rather upon this account, becauſe there are ſome among us, which are well conceited of that curſed Religion, becauſe they never have ſmarted under that Antichriſtian tyranny, as our forefathers have done; they have forgotten the blood of our Martyrs that was ſhed in Queen Marys days: Nay, that blood that was ſpilt in *Ireland* but 21 years agoe; therefore that you may be fenced againſt the flatteries and inſinuations of Popiſh Doctrine, take notice that Popiſh Religion is an Idolatrous Religion; they are guilty of as groſs Idolatry as ever was practiſed amoug the Heathen; for,

1. They worſhip the Saints with a religious worſhip, which is proper to God onely; they pray to Saints departed, which is a diſhonour to God the Father, and Jeſus Chriſt the only Mediator between God and man; They pray to the Virgin *Mary*, and make her their Redeemer

Redeemer, by praying to her, ſaying, *Save us O Savioureſs, and redeem us, and in the hour of death receive us.* This is a great diſhonour to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; What can be greater idolatry then this, to attribute that to a creature, which is proper only to the Creator?

2. They ſet up Images to be worſhipped, contrary to the ſecond Commandement, which ſays, *Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any graven image, nor bow down to it, nor worſhip it,* &c. But they will object and ſay, They do not worſhip the Image, but God in the Image. I Anſwer; Neither did the children of *Iſrael* worſhip the golden Calf, but they thought they worſhipped God, in or under the Image of the golden Calf, *Exod.* 32. 4. yet it was groſs idolatry, as appears, 1 *Cor.* 10. 7. *Neither be ye idolaters as were ſome of them; as it is written, the people ſate down to eat and to drink, and roſe up to play.*

3. Their idolatry exceeds the idolatry of the Heathen, in that they worſhip a piece of bread, or the bread Tranſubſtantiated (as they call it) into the body of Chriſt. Now, if the body of Chriſt be in Heaven, as we are ſure it is, as appears by that of the Apoſtle, *Act.* 3. 21. *Whom the heaven muſt receive until the time of reſtitution of all things, which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets ſince the world began*; The Apoſtle ſayes, the heaven muſt receive him until the time of the reſtitution of all things; that is, until the day of Judgement: If Chriſts body be in Heaven, then certainly

they worſhip not the body of Chriſt, but a piece of bread; and what more abominable idolatry then this? One of their own Religion *Coſterus* confeſſes, It is more tolerable to worſhip a Dog, or a Cat, or a Crocodile then to worſhip a piece of bread: This their idolatry is a great ſtumbling-block both to the Jews and Heathens; therefore *Averroes*, a great Philoſopher, being asked why he would not be a Chriſtian; becauſe ſayes he, *The Chriſtians eat the God they worſhip*; therefore ſayes he, *Let my ſoul be among the Philoſophers.*

Again; As they are idolatrous in their worſhip, ſo they are erroneous in their Doctrines; witneſs their doctrine of Juſtification, denying the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and truſting to their own righteouſneſs; witneſs their doctrine of merits by works, yea their doing works of ſupererogation; witneſs their Popiſh pardons, and Purgatory ſatisfaction, as if the ſatisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt were imperfect; witneſs their robbing of Jeſus Chriſt of all his Offices, both as King, Prieſt, and Prophet, as might eaſily be proved. In brief, the Popiſh Religion is a looſe and licentious Religion, a ſin-tolerating Religion; for the *Pope* can diſpence with murdering of Princes, and the like, if it will promote his intereſt; forbidding Prieſts marriage, and yet ſuffering at the ſame time Stews and Brothel-houſes. It was a ſaying of Sir *Walter Raleigh*, Were I to chuſe a Religion for liberty and wickedneſs, I would chuſe the Popiſh Religion; therefore in Gods fear,

fear, hold fast the truth against Popery: And hold it fast likewise against the error of *Arminianism*, which advances mans free Will above Gods free grace: And hold fast the truth against *Socinians*, that deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In brief, be rooted, setled and established in the present truth; stick close unto the Word of God, as *David* did; stand for it, plead for it, chuse to lose liberty, estates, comforts, life and all, rather then to part with the truth; *David* made the truth his Inheritance; Now as *Naboth* said to *Ahab*, *The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the Inheritance of my Fathers unto thee*, 1 Kings 21.3. Could he say so of a temporal Inheritance, & shall not we say so of a spiritual Inheritance, which is transmitted to us, by the blood of Martyrs? Shall the Ministers of the Gospel have cause to complain, as in *Jer.* 9.3. *And they bend their tongue like their bow for lyes; but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth*? Shall we deal with the truth as the Priest and Levite did with the man that went down from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, and fell among theeves, left him wounded and half dead, nay, dying in the streets? Hath God said, *Buy the truth and sell it not*, Prov. 23. and shall we sell it for our lusts and profits? God forbid. Consider who it was that abode not in the truth; it was Satan, a Lyar, who hath no truth in him, *John* 8.44. even so all wicked men are said to be *destitute of the truth, and to hold the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. 1.18. that is, they strive against the light of

truth in their hearts, thoſe common principles of truth which they had in their underſtandings, they ſuppreſſed and choaked, that ſo they might ſin more freely; but God forbid that we ſhould do ſo: Will not this make the ſpirit of truth to forſake us, when we forſake the the truth? What an heroical reſolution was that in holy *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. *For we can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth?* Oh what an honour is it to a Chriſtian, when truth hath ſuch ſoveraignity in his heart, that it is dearer to him then his own life! *Tit.* 1. 9. *Holding faſt the faithful Word*: Hold forth the word of life, and hold faſt the word of truth; we may joyn them both together; hold forth the word of life, & hold faſt the word of truth; hold forth the word of life by a true profeſſion and converſation, and hold faſt the word of truth by courage, conſtancy and reſolution.

I, But may be you will ask me, What means may we uſe thus to hold faſt the truth?

I anſwer briefly;

1. Imbrace the truth, not only in the light of it, but in the love of it; what you love, you will be ſure not to part with: Oh, get you hearts fired with love to the truths of the Goſpel, that you may ſay, Lord, I love thy truth exceedingly!

2. Love not the truth for the perſons ſake, but love the perſon for the truths ſake; love no mans parts or perſon to admire him, and be a follower of him farther then he follows Chriſt; *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am*

of

of Chriſt, 1 Cor. 11. 1. ſaith the Apoſtle; it was a great fault in *Barnabas*, Gal. 2. 13: that he was carried away by *Peters* diſſimulation; by his admiring *Peters* perſon ſo much, by his reſting and relying too much upon *Peter*, he fell into *Peters* error.

3. Be ever jealous of your own ſtrength, and truſt not too much to your own ability; this will provoke God to leave you to your ſelves, and then you will fall fearfully. 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *For when I am weak, then am I ſtrong*; when I am weakeſt in my ſelf, then am I ſtrongeſt in a Saviour; but when I am ſtrongeſt in my ſelf, in my own opinion, then am I weakeſt in a Saviour; no man ſtands by his own ſtrength; for by humane ſtrength can none prevail.

4. And laſtly; Get your hearts eſtabliſhed with grace, *Heb.* 13. 9. *It is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace*; be ballaſted with grace, as the word βεβαιῶς ſignifies: A Ship that is well ballaſted is not ſo apt and ready to reel as one that is not; and when the Apoſtle puts in a caveat againſt unſetledneſs and falling from grace, what means does he preſcribe? 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18. *Ye therefore beloved, ſeeing ye know theſe things before, beware leſt ye alſo being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord & Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, ſays he. O that you & I could grow more in grace; Oh that we could grow more in the practical part of Religion, in our hearts and houſes, in our lives and converſations; I be-

ſeech you therefore, hearken to this firſt Exhortation and Duty here preſt upon you, namely, to hold faſt the truth you have received, hold it faſt in your memories, in your affections, and in your converſations; ſo much for the firſt branch of the Doctrine; *That Chriſtians muſt hold faſt the truth they have received with conſtancy and perſeverance.*

I come now to the ſecond Propoſition, or ſecond branch of the Doctrine, that is this;

Chriſtians muſt hold faſt that Grace that they have received, with conſtancy and perſeverance.

For the proof of this, the Scripture is abundantly plain and pregnant, in *Pſa.* 119. 33. *Teach me the way of thy Statutes, O Lord! and I will keep it to the end*, Mat. 24. 13. *he that endures to the end, he ſhall be ſaved*; it is not ſetting our feet in the way of Chriſtianity, but it is a continuance in that courſe that will bring you to the end of your hopes, the ſalvation of your ſouls: ſo in *Heb.* 3. 14. *We are made Partakers of Chriſt* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *if we hold the beginning of our confidence firme unto the end*: this will be an evidence that we are partakers of Chriſt indeed, if we perſevere and continue in the grace we have received to the end of our days, ſo we are commanded to ſerve *the Lord*, not ſome few days, *but all the days of our lives*, Luk. 1. 75. *He that puts his hand to the Plow, and looks back* (ſaith our Saviour)

is not fit for the Kingdom of God, Luk. 9. *ult.* and in *John* 8. 31. *If you continue in my words, then are you my Disciples indeed*; without this perseverance, we are but nominal, not real Disciples; But if you aske me; Why must Christians continue in grace, and hold fast the grace they have received? Hear but some Scripture Arguments, strongly pleading for this truth.

First, unless Christians hold fast the grace and holiness they have received, they lose all they have, and all they hope for; All they have, *Viz.* Their present present endeavours; And all they hope for, their future reward.

1. They lose all they have, all their praying, reading, hearing, and communicating, and humbling themselves before God; all this will be lost if they do not persevere; does not God himself say so? *Ezek.* 18. 24. *When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness*, (he does not speak there of one truely and really righteous in a state of grace, one that is savingly righteous) *when he turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? all the righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he dye*; So that a man loseth all he hath done in the business of Religion; Saith *Hierom*, *We must be judged, not by our past, but by our present condition*;

As the Tree falls, ſo it lyes; as death leaves us, ſo ſhall judgement find us.

2. He loſeth all he hopes for too; for the Crown is promiſed to none but to thoſe that do hold out: *Be thou faithful to the death, and thou ſhalt receive a Crown of life*, Rev. 2. 10. Chriſtianity is compared to a race; *let us run the race that is ſet before us*, Heb. 12. 1. Now as in a race, it is not enough for a man to begin well, but he muſt hold out, elſe he loſeth the Goale; ſo is it in the race of Chriſtianity; therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *ſo run that you may obtain*; not onely run, but *ſo run*, that you may not loſe the Goale, 1 Cor. 9. 24.

Reaſon Second; Such as Chriſts love is to us, ſuch muſt our love to Chriſt be. Chriſts love to us is a conſtant and unchangeable love, *whom he loves, he loves to the end*, Joh. 13. 1. The Lord Chriſt is not onely the *beginner, but the finiſher of our faith*, Heb. 12. 2. He did not leave the work of our Redemption imperfect, but he held out until he came to *conſummatum eſt*, till he cryed out upon the Croſs, it is finiſhed.

Reaſon Third, may be this; Chriſtians muſt hold faſt the grace they have received, becauſe Apoſtatizing and turning our backs upon God is a moſt dangerous, damnable, ſoul-deſtroying ſin.

Firſt, It is dangerous in the Original of it, it ſprings from four bitter roots.

1. It ſprings from Infidelity, or unbeleif; *take heed*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *leſt there be in any of*

you

you an evil heart of unbeleif, in departing from the living God, Heb. 3. 12. unbeleif is a damnable sin, where it is not bemoaned, bewailed, and striven against; but Raigning unbeleif is a damnable sin; so saith our Saviour, *Mark ult.* 16. *He that beleives not, shall be damned. And he that beleives not, the wrath of God abides upon him forever*, Joh. 3. *ult.* Now this Infidelity makes the soul depart from God, and it makes God depart from the soul; It was a grave observation of an eminent Divine, now with God, Look as the first return of the soul to God is by faith, (for faith sets the soul in joynt, it brings Christ and the soul together) so the first departing of the soul from God is by unbeleif; for from thence comes a departing to other sins; and this departing to other sins, increaseth our unbeleif; and unbeleif being increased, the rent or breach between God and the soul is made wider and wider, till at last the soul comes to a total departing from God, and then God totally departs from the soul; and says, depart from me thou cursed wretch, I know thee not; Now this same Apostacy it springs from unbeleif.

2. This Apostacy springs from Hypocrisie, for usually Hypocrisie ends in Apostacy, as I have told you often, *Judas* the Hypocrite, proved *Judas* the Apostate; *Amaziah did that that was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart*, 2 Chron. 25. 2. therefore *Amaziah* the Hypocrite, proved *Amaziah* the

the Apoſtate; in *Pſal.* 78. 37. It is ſaid there, *Their hearts were not upright, neither remained they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant.* Why were they not ſtedfaſt, why did not they keep conſtant to the ways of God, to the vows and Covenants made with God? *their hearts were not upright*; where grace is ſincere, it will be laſting; but that which is counterfeit will be loſt; what ever is counterfeit is fading.

3. It ſprings from Pride and Preſumption; when men think they have grace enough, and holineſs enough, and have gone far enough in the way to heaven, this is the root of Apoſtacy; there is a gradual as well as a total Apoſtacy; the Saints and Servants of God may be guilty of gradual Apoſtacy; ſo *Peter* was, though not of total Apoſtacy; it was *Peters* preſumption that was one principal cauſe of his fall; lofty Cedars are thrown down with a Tempeſt, when the lower trees in the valley ſtand firm and faſt; ſo likewiſe lofty Chriſtians, high in their own conceits, many times neſtle themſelves on high, and their fall is great; whereas Chriſtians that walk humbly are ſupported and preſerved. Look as a man that gazeth at the ſtars, looks up on high, quickly catches a fall, becauſe he looks not to his feet; ſo a man that is highly conceited in his own opinion, lifts up his head on high, many times catches a fearful fall; it is juſt with God to leave ſuch men to try them; *Hezekiah* though a very gracious King, yet when his heart was lifted up with pride, 2 *Chron.* 32. 25. the Text ſaith,

God

God left him to himself, to try what was in his heart, in *vers.* 31. That *Salomon* speaks of falling into misery, is as true of falling and declining in grace, *Prov.* 16. 18. *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty Spirit before a fall.*

4. Apostacy springs from covetousness, and worldliness; look as the seed in the thorny ground, it brought nothing to perfection, because it was choaked with the cares, riches and pleasures of this world, as you may read in the Parable of the Sower, *Luk.* 8. 14. So is it here, where the heart is stuft with covetousness, and the cares of this life, that is usually a forerunner of a fearful fall; *Demas hath forsaken me, having imbraced this present world*; what was the ground of his Apostacy, but his wordlyness and selfishness? so that apostacy is dangerous in the Original of it.

Secondly, It is damnable in the effects of it; for,

1. This puts Jesus Christ to open shame; in *Heb.* 6. 6. Apostates crucifie Christ afresh, and put him to open shame; for by falling away from him, we do as much as tell the world we have found his service that it was an unprofitable service; the service of the world is better then his service, and that we have not found in Christ what we expected; when we turn our backs on Christ and go to the world, we do as much as openly proclaim, the world is a better Master then Christ is; When Souldiers forsake their General, it is a dishonour to him.

2. It

2. Then it is damnable in the effects of it, becauſe it puts Religion to open ſhame, it makes the name of God to be blaſphemed, *Rom.* 2. 24. It is a ſcandal to the weak, it ſtaves men off from the Profeſſion of Religion, and it opens the mouth of Adverſaries to ſpeak evil of the ways of God; thus it is damnable in the effects.

Thirdly, It is deſtructive in the end and iſſue of it; for,

First, God will reckon Apoſtates amongſt Reprobates; *God will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity, thoſe that turn aſide to their crooked ways*, Pſa. 125. *ult.* lead them forth, that is, put them in the ſame condition with the moſt profligate and ſcandalous ſinner that is.

2. Their latter end ſhall be worſe then their beginning, as our Saviour ſhews in the Parable, *Mat.* 12. 43. *When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, and returns again, he brings ſeven Divels more, and the end of that man is worſe then his beginning*: The Apoſtle tells us, in *Pet.* 2. 2. and the two laſt verſes, *It had been better men had never known the ways of holineſs, then having known it to turn aſide from the holy commandement*; it fares with them according to the Proverb, *the Dog is turned to his vomit again, and the Sow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.*

Before I come to make Application of this truth, there is one doubt to be reſolved.

You ſay, Chriſtians muſt hold faſt the grace they have received; Why may ſome ſay, Can a man

man that hath received saving grace, [illegible] that grace he hath received?

To this I answer, no: He cannot lose saving grace, totally or finally; this is *Mary's part*, which cannot be taken away; *Mary hath chose that good part which cannot be taken away*, Luk. 10. 42. The Apostle saith, *he that is born of God, sins not*, cannot sin to death, *because the seed of God*, as a principle of spiritual life abideth in him, 1 *Joh.* 3. 9. therfore he cannot sin unto death; *the righteous are said to be built on an everlasting foundation*, Prov. 10. 25. that is, he abides unmoveable in grace, till grace be turned into glory, and the reason of this, is saving grace bestowed upon the elect, is built on four immutable and unmoveable Pillars.

1. The love that God bares to his people, it is an everlasting love, *Jer.* 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*; we are very fickle and unconstant in our love to God; but God is not fickle or unconstant in his love to us.

2. The Covenant of grace is a stedfast Covenant, so saith *David* in the last words of that sweet singer of *Israel*, when he was to leave the world, *He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, sure and stedfast, and ordered in all things*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. It is a Covenant sealed with the blood of Christ; therefore it is called *the blood of the everlasting Covenant*, Heb. 13. 20. this everlasting Covenant cannot be broken: True indeed, sin may break the peace of the Covenant, but it cannot break the bond of the Covenant of grace; it may break the peace of the Covenant,

nant, *Pſa.* 89. 31. *If thy children break my ſtatutes, and keep not my Commandements, then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with a rod, and their iniquities with ſtripes; but I will not ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail, my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth.*

3. The third Pillar is this, the power of God, which is irreſiſtible and unconquerable; on this Pillar our bleſſed Saviour builds the ſalvation of his Elect, *John* 10. 29. *My father that gave me theſe ſheep, is greater then all, and none can take them out of my Fathers hand*; and on this Pillar St. *Paul* built his hope of ſalvation; *He is able to keep that I have committed to him*; he is able to keep my *depoſitum*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12.

4. The fourth Pillar is the interceſſion of Chriſt; and his interceſſion is a prevailing interceſſion, *Heb.* 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever lives to make interceſſion for them.* Whence was it that *Peter*, though he fell fearfully, yet he did not fall finally? becauſe our Saviour prayed for *Peter*; *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not*, *Luke* 22. 31. But mark, though this be true, That ſaving grace once wrought in the heart cannot be loſt, for it is built on theſe four immutable pillars, The Love of God, The Covenant of Grace, The Power of God, and The Interceſſion of Chriſt; yet it is poſſible for a man in the ſtate of grace to have his declinings (as I ſhewed you not long ago) he may have his declinings in regard of the meaſure of grace, & the comfortable feeling of grace,

grace, and in the operations and vigour of his grace.

First, A child of God may lose the former heat and fervency that he had. The Church of *Ephesus* fell from her *first love*.

2. He may lose the comfortable feeling of Grace; *David* prayes, *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation.*

3. Grace may be as a spark of fire covered over with a heap of ashes, that yields neither light nor heat, and so he may lose the vigour of his grace; therefore Christians should take heed of these declinings, and should hold fast the grace they have received.

Now to make some Application.

1. By way of Reproof; How justly taxable and reproveable are they that do not hold fast the grace they have received, but fall from their *first love*? Oh, how many back-fliders are there, many that did begin well, but they are weary of well-doing! the Lord awaken them out of their drowsiness; know you not it will be bitterness in the latter end? will you lose all you have, and all you hope for? God forbid.

Therefore to close up this Point with a word of Exhortation.

I beseech and exhort you, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, That you would hold fast the grace you have received, the savour of Religion that you have got, the principles of Religion, and the practice of a holy Conversation;

ſation; hold faſt theſe. Take heed of Apoſtacy, as you love your God, as you love your ſouls, as you tender your own everlaſting ſalvation; be not found in the number of thoſe that *draw back to perdition, but be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* 15. *ult.* That you may perſevere and not be weary, let me give you theſe three or four helps.

1. Be not content with a notional and traditional faith; for ſuch a faith will change as the time changes; but labour for a divine, well-grounded, lively, working, effectual faith, experimental faith, ſuch as the *Samaritans* had; *Now do we believe*, ſay they, *not becauſe thou toldſt us this is the Chriſt, but becauſe we have heard him our ſelves, and we know indeed this is the Chriſt the Saviour of the world.*

2. Be much in duty; if you would not be weary of well-doing, be much in well-doing; It is a Paradox in other things, to ſay, He that would not be weary of running, let him run the more; and if you would not be weary of working, work the more: but here in Divinity it is a truth; the more you are doing, the better you will be able to do; be acting grace, and in the acting of it your grace will be encreaſed; grace acted, intends the habit, and the habit intended, does encreaſe ſtrength; therefore up and be doing, and God ſhall be with you.

3. *Walk in the ſpirit, and then you ſhall not fulfil*

fulfill the lusts of the flesh; if the Spirit of God help you, *you shall run and not be weary, walk and not faint*, *Isaiah* 40. ult. Remember what I have often told you, It is not the strenghth of habitual grace, but it is the auxiliary, the assisting grace of the Spirit that carries you through every duty: Though you do duty, yet the Spirit of Christ is the moving and working cause; for *without him you can do nothing*.

4. Set before you the example of the Saints; that is another help to perseverance; it is said of *Moses*, he held out, though he met with temptations on the right hand and on the left, he held out; why? because he saw him that was invisible, *Heb.* 11. 27. so *Job*, *Job* 23. 11. *My feet have held his path, his way have I kept and not declined*; so *David*, *I was almost consumed on earth*, by trouble and persecution that he met with, *yet have I not forgotten thy Law*, Psal. 119. 87. so *Daniel*, when he knew the writing was sealed, and his Religion would cost him not only his liberty, but his life; but *Daniel* was *Daniel* still, he went on his course as he was wont to do, *Dan.* 6. 10. The blessed Martyrs that went through imprisonment, bonds, reproaches, persecution, yet with what courage did they press towards the Mark; and so with courage they held out to the end and in the end.

5. Be often meditating on the rich and royal reward, those rich and glorious hopes laid up for those that persevere; this, if any thing, will

bear up your hearts and hopes when they are ready to faint: What made the Apoſtle hold out in the midſt of all temptations? 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. *For this cauſe we faint not*; why? becauſe, ſayes he, *our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, ver. 17. *Moſes* he held out, *chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*; why? *he had an eye to the recompence of reward*, Heb. 11. 26.

A Traveller after a long journey, when he is weary and faint, and ſits down, if he ſee the Town before him, it puts life into him, and he plucks up his feet and reſolves not to be weary till he be at his journeys end. Oh look at the Crown and white Robe ſet before you, and faint if you can; get on the top of Mount *Nebo*, look on the Land of Promiſe, thoſe good things ſet before you; taſte the grapes of *Canaan* before you come to *Canaan*. Conſider two things; From what you are delivered, and to what you are appointed; you are delivered from wrath, and appointed to mercy; delivered from Hell, and appointed to Heaven; delivered from a hopeleſs condition, to a moſt hopeful and happy condition, that the heart can conceive or tongue expreſs. If theſe things were ſoundly digeſted, and ſeriouſly conſidered, they would awaken your drooping drouſie ſpirits, and ſet the wheels a going, and make us redouble our endeavour, and encreaſe our diligence, that the Kingdom of Heaven might even ſuffer

violence;

violence; yea, these things will constrain us, in the midst of all afflictions, temptations and trials, to press towards the Mark; therefore *awake thou that sleepest*; the Apostle speaks of a sleep of drowsiness, *Rom.* 13. 11. for saye the Apostle, *Your salvation is neerer then when you believed.* A stone the nearer it comes to the Center, the swifter the motion will be: Redeem & recover lost time by double diligence; set on Heaven by a new resolution; set thy face toward *Sion*, as one that looks on all these creature-comforts as vanishing into smoak, and as one that resolves to have Heaven or nothing; do much, and suffer much, thou wilt never repent; *Be stedfast and unmoveable, abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

To set homer this Exhortation of holding fast what you have received, there are two Motives in the Text which I will dispatch with a quick hand.

First, *Behold I come quickly*; What coming does our Saviour here speak of? I Answer; This coming of our Saviour may be understood three wayes: He comes either in a way of Tryal, or in a way of Mercy, or in a way of Judicature. He comes in a way of Tryal, so he foretels the heavy temptations and persecutions that came upon this Church in the time of *Trajanus* the Emperor, as Mr. *Brightman* well observes: This lasted fourteen years, yet our Saviour calls it but an hour of temptation, in Ver. 10. Likewise *Strabo* the Geographer

writes; That the Church of *Philadelphia* was often shaken with earth-quakes; both She and other Cities were shaken with Political earth-quakes, as well as Natural; with adversaries that sought their ruin. Hence you may take this Observation:

That God hath sore and shaking Tryals to exercise his Church withal.

Through many Afflictions we must enter into the Kingdom of heaven; And they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution; In one kind or other, in one measure or other. God sees shaking is needful to awaken us, to shake us out of our security, and to purifie, and reform, and refine us; therefore let us not settle upon our Lees, and promise our selves security from Tryals. The hand of God hath been heavy upon the Protestant Churches in *Piedmount*, in *Poland*; Oh, the dreadful things that they have suffered! why should we expect exemption? are we better then they? Be forewarned, that you may be fore-armed; lay in provision against the day of Tryal; lay in a stock of faith, and patience, and self-denial, &c. *Gird on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand.*

2. It may be understood in a way of mercy; I come quickly in a way of mercy; I come to moderate the tryals, and to deliver thee from temptations. God will not suffer the rod of the wicked to lye on the back of his righteous servants, *Psal.* 125. 3. so then the Doctrine is this:

Doct.

Doct. *The troubles and tryals of Gods Church and Chosen, though they may be sharp, yet they shall be but short.*

I Come quickly, I come to deliver my Church quickly; *Neros* Tribulation was but for ten days. *Rev.* 2. 10. *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer*, Isa. 54. 7, 8.

Application.

Therefore it serves exceedingly for the encouragement of the godly; our afflictions are but for a moment; do but set against your present Affliction the glory that it brings after; and against light afflictions, a weight of glory, and against momentany affliction eternal glory; and what comparison is there between them? none at all; but,

3. *I come quickly*; It may be taken in a way of judicature; I come to call men to account, to returne to every man according to their works; therefore see that you hold fast what you have received, and continue constant to the end, and you shall be sure to receive a rich and Royal reward. *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his works shall be*, Rev. 22. 12. Heb. 10. 37. *Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry: Be patient therefore brethren, stablish your hearts, for the comming of the Lord draws nigh*, Jam. 5. 8.

But here it may be objected, Our Saviour spake this above sixteen hundred years agoe; *the com-*

comming of the Lord draws nigh; *And yet he is not come to judgement:* To this I Anſwer, A thouſand years in Gods account, is but as one day; we count moments long, becauſe we are but poor ſhort-ſpirited creatures; But God that is of an eternal duration, he counts a thouſand years but a very ſmall moment; all that ſpace of time ſhould be ſmall to them that know the greatneſs of eternity; Do but think of Eternity, and alas, a thouſand of years are but as a moment; but obſerve here, when our Saviour ſpeaks of coming to judgement, he fixeth a behold before it; *Behold I come quickly*; it teacheth us this Doct.

Doct. *Chriſts coming to judgement is a matter of infinite concernment, and requires our moſt ſerious conſideration.*

Behold, Conſider what I ſay, *I am comeing to judgement*; There will therefore be a day of judgement, that is certain; this is called *the great day* in *verſe 6.* of the Epiſtle of St. *Jude*, and in 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *That day*, καὶ ἐξοχὴν, by way of eminency, and it is called, *a day of judgement*, becauſe then every one ſhall receive a final ſentence, either of abſolution or condemnation: But why is this a matter of ſo great concernment: I Anſwer, becauſe eternity depends upon it; it will be a final determination to every ſoul, to an everlaſting and unchangeable condition, of endleſs bliſs or woe; O this eternity! it ſwallows up all our thoughts; if it were ſeriouſly conſidered, it were enough to make the moſt prophane and profligate ſinner to turn the Strickteſt Saint that ever trode upon earth: Therefore to make ſome uſe of this.

Live

Live in a continual expectation of Christs coming; But some will say, This day of Judgement cannot be so sudden; for the Jews are not yet called, and Anti-Christ is not yet come down. I answer; and O that this Answer might sink into your hearts: Though the world should continue a thousand years, yet there is a particular Judgement as well as a general; every mans deaths day, is every mans dooms-day; *It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgement.* As soon as the soul departs out of the body, then it is judged; the soul is judged then, either to Heaven or Hell; therefore thy day of death will be the Judgement day to thee, when ever it falls, though it falls this week before the next. Oh that you and I could be affected as *Jerom* was, Whether I eat or drink, or what ever I do, methinks I hear the Trumpet sound in my ears, Arise ye dead and come to Judgement. Therefore let your whole lives be a continual Preparation for that great day; get those graces that may present you without spot or blot before Gods Tribunal. Get

1. The precious grace of faith, for that puts on the Royal Robe of Christs righteousness; and in that Robe you will stand undaunted.

2. Get Repentance from dead works; Be purifying your selves more and more, as he is pure; *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the day of refreshing shall come, Act.* 3. 19.

3. Get a Christian and constant care and diligence in your general and particular callings; *Blessed is the man whom his Lord shall find so doing.* This is the first motive drawn from the suddenness of our Saviours coming; *I come quickly.* Another Motive (and so that a few words, and I have done) *That no man take thy Crown*; The danger of losing the Crown: But here it may be demanded, What is meant by Crown? I answer; Either the crown of Gospel-Ministers, or else the Crown of Eternal Life. First, God honoured this Church with a very glorious Ministry, so that the very adversaries, the seeming Jews did worship, that is, did submit themselves to this Church, and acknowledge Her to be beloved of God; God honoured this Church with a very glorious Ministry. Then it may be meant of the

Crown

Crown of life, as Mr. *Perkins* well obſerves, upon the Text, *Rev.* 2. 10. *I will give thee a Crown of life.*

But here it may be demanded, Can the Crown of life be loſt? To this I Anſwer.

In the viſible Church there are Hypocrites as well as ſincere Chriſtians; Now Hypocrites may loſe the Crown, becauſe they never had a title to it; they never had a title to the Crown of glory; a man muſt have an intereſt in grace, before he can have a title to the Crown of glory; For others that have grace begun in their hearts, you muſt know ſuch cautions as theſe are, are to quicken them, 2 *Joh.* 8. *Look well to your ſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.* Heb. 12. 15. *Beware leſt any of you fall ſhort of the grace of God*: Or it may be ſuch cautions are put in to let you ſee, that if you are left to your ſelves, you would let go grace and loſe glory and all.

To ſhut up all, if a Goſpel Miniſtry be a Crown; Oh that you and I would learn to Prize a Goſpel Miniſtry more then we have done, it may be God will teach you to know the wrath of it by the want of it; hold it faſt, remember God can give the Goſpel to another Nation, that may be will bring forth better fruit then we have done; and when the Goſpel is gone, our glory is gone; then may we ſay, *the Glory, the Glory,* is departed from *England*; But then,

2. If there be a Crown of glory laid up for them that do hold out, then receive the Exhortation, a Text I opened in many Sermons, on *Heb.* 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it*; Therefore take hold of God by Faith; Be much in prayer, be much in wraſtling with God, be much in treaſuring up grace againſt the day of glory, as wicked men treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath; Study to be better acquainted, not only with the principles of Religion, but with the power of godlineſs, Get more Communion with Chriſt, and influence of grace from him, get more conformity to him; O mind this buſineſs of eternity, of getting this crown that is laid up for thoſe that hold out and perſevere. I conclude this Text with that in *Rom.* 2. 7. *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, Eternal life.*

Mercy despised, AND God provoked thereby:

Psal. 106 24.

Yea, they despised the pleasant Land, and believed not his Word.

IN the last Sermons which I gave you out of *Heb.* 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear, least a Promise being left us of entering into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*; I shewed you, what a dreadful, invaluable, unconceivable and irrecoverable loss it was to come short of that eternal Rest, that God hath prepared for the Saints in Light. In losing of Heaven you shall lose the presence of God, *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore*: In losing of Heaven, you shall lose the favour of God, never, never, to enjoy a smile of his face, never to lye under the hope of one drop

of mercy: In losing Heaven, you shall lose fellowship and communion with God, that eternal happiness which is the portion of the Saints; such an invaluable loss, that Eternity it self will be little enough to deplore it and bewail it.

My Design in the choyce of this Text is, to shew you from it, what one main cause is, why men come short of that eternal happiness, namely, their despising and undervaluing those glorious hopes that are laid up in Heaven; as the despising the Land of *Canaan* was the main reason why so many thousands of the *Israelites* were excluded from the Land of *Canaan*, as the Text here tells you, *Yea, they despised the Pleasant Land, they believed not his Word.* Many were the provoking sins that the people of *Israel* stood guilty of, after that the Lord had wrought that glorious deliverance for them, in bringing them out of the Land of *Egypt*: as the *Psalmist* reckons up a whole Catalogue of them, in this excellent *Psalme*, wherein my Text lyes. As,

First, Their Rebellion at the Red Sea, in the 7. verse, *Our Fathers understood not thy Wonders in Egypt, they remembred not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red Sea*, when God had wrought that glorious deliverance for them; for you know they were ready to distrust the Power of God, and they murmured against *Moses* the Servant of God, *Exod.* 14. 11. *And they said unto Moses, because there were no Graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to dye in the Wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt.*

Secondly, Another sin was their murmuring for want

want of flesh, in the 14. verse of this *Psalm*, *But lusted exceedingly*, or they lusted with a very great lust: Nothing but flesh forsooth, would serve their turns; they would not be contented with the provision that God made for them, of *Mannah*, which was Angels Food, which is called Angels food, because that if so be the glorious Angels in Heaven should want bread for their entertainment and provision, if they stood in need of bread, they could not have better bread than that which God fed the *Israelites* with from Heaven every day, but this would not content them, they murmured, and lusted exceedingly after flesh.

Thirdly, Another sin was their Sedition, and their Conspiracy against *Moses* and against *Aaron*, in the 16. verse; *They envyed Moses also in the Camp, and Aaron the Saint of the Lord. You take too much upon you, you sons of Levi*; why should you be more holy than we? are not all the Congregation holy? This was a horrible provocation that made the Lord to cause the earth to open and swallow up *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*.

The fourth sin they was guilty of, was their despising or undervaluing the Pleasant Land that God gave them, in the words of the Text, *Yea, they despised the Pleasant Land, they believed not his Word*. So then, in the Text you may take notice of these two Particulars.

First, *Israels* horrible ingratitude, in this Phrase, *They despised the Pleasant Land*.

Secondly, The ground of that Ingratitude, in these words, *They believed not his word*. For the first.

First, *Israels* horrible ingratitude, *They despised the Pleasant Land*. By a pleasant Land here is

meant the Land of *Canaan*, that Land of Promise, that God had promised to *Abraham* four hundred and thirty years before ever they did enjoy it; and it is called in the Hebrew ארץ חמדה: which is *a Land of Desires*, or *a desireable Land*; as dainty food is called *Meat of Desires* (Job 33.20.) in the Hebrew מאכל תאוה *So that his Life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat*, or meat of desires. This same dainty Land, this same desirable Land, this same Pleasant Land, this Land of Promise, they despised, they rejected, they contemptuously scorned: So the Original word ימאסו properly signifies. Now consider this Land of *Canaan* here, which they despised, in a twofold Notion.

First, As it was an earthly possession.

Secondly, As it was a Type, or Pledge, or earnest-penny of that Heavenly Inheritance, laid up for the Saints in Light: And you shall see in both these respects, their despising this Land was horrible ingratitude.

First, Consider it in the first Notion, namely, as it was an earthly Possession, it was very great ingratitude. But consider it in the Second Notion, namely, as it was a Pledge and earnest-penny of the Heavenly Inheritance, so it was a far greater ingratitude. Take it in the first Notion, for an earthly Possession, so the Doctrine you may observe from thence, is this,

Doct. *That despising or undervaluing of those outward blessings and favours, that God bestowes upon a people, is a God provoking sin, a sin of great ingratitude.*

This

This you see was the sin of *Israel*, after they came out of the Land of *Egypt*, to despise any Land that God should bestow upon them; but especially considering that they had been bond-men in *Ægypt*, that they that had undergone such a base servitude, that they that had undergone such burthens of Tyranny, for God to bring them out of such a condition, into any Land, this had been a great mercy; but to bring them into such a Land, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, to bring them into a Land so desireable: This certainly was a grievous provocation, especially, if you consider what Land this was; for

First, It was very delightful in regard of the Scituation of it; *Canaan* being scituated (as Geographers observe) in the midst or Center of the whole Earth, for it had *Asia* upon the East, and *Europe* upon the West, and *Africa* upon the South, and *America*, and *Scithia*, and *Persia* upon the North; it was very pleasant therefore in the Scituation of it.

Secondly, It was pleasant in regard of the Aire; though it is true, it was a hotter Climate than ours is, yet it was a very temperate Climate, it was a Climate of that temper, that they were free from all noisome vapours; so it was a healthful Land in that regard.

Thirdly, It was a very fruitful Land; a Land that did abound with Corn, and Cattel, and Vines, and Fig-trees, and Pomegranates, as you may find *Deut.* 8. 7, 8, 9. *For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good Land, a Land of Brooks of water, of Fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys, and hills; A Land of Wheat, and Barley, and Vines, and*

Fig-trees, and Pomegranates, a Land of Oyl, Olives and Honey; A Land wherein thou shalt eat bread, without scarceneſſe; thou ſhalt not lack any thing in it; a Land whoſe ſtones are iron, and out of whoſe hills thou mayeſt dig braſs. Its a Land ſaith the Lord, wherein thou ſhalt not lack any thing, any thing that may be deſireable, any thing that may be comfortable for their ſubſiſtance; for them therefore to deſpiſe ſuch a Land as this was, it could not but provoke the Lord to anger. You know there is no ſuſter provocation among men, than kindneſſe churliſhly refuſed. Now for the *Iſraelites* to deſpiſe this Land, a free gift, a gift of bounty and favour, ſuch a gift as they could not in the leaſt merit at the hand of God; you find God himſelf beating them off from that, *Deut.* 9. 4. *Speak not thou in thine heart, after the Lord thy God hath caſt them out before thee, ſaying, for my righteouſneſſe the Lord hath brought me in to poſſeſſe this Land.* It was not for thy righteouſneſſe ſake, but it was for his own Name ſake, and his Promiſe ſake, that he made to *Abraham* for them to poſſeſſe this Land; therefore it was a gift of favour, and free bounty, doubtleſſe, and it was a very great ſin, becauſe ingratitude is hateful both to God and man. *Unthankfulneſſe* (as one calls it) *is the helliſh bar or ſtop to all future mercies.* A man that is about to poure in ſome precious Oyl or Liquor into a Glaſſe, if he ſee the Glaſſe be crack't, or there be a hole in it, you know he will poure in no Oyle or Liquor in that Glaſſe: So here, an unthankful man is a broken Glaſſe, and God will not beſtow his favours upon thoſe that are unthankful, at leaſt he will not beſtow them in mercy; he ſometimes gives theſe out-

outward blessings in anger, *I gave thee a King in mine anger*, Hos. 13. 11. But he never gives mercies in love and favour, to unthankful wretches. This sin of unthankfulnesse sometimes provokes the Lord to strain for his Rent, when men will not give him the quit Rent of thankfulnesse. Therefore says God, *Hos.* 2. 8, 9. *Because she did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyle, and multiplyed her Silver and Gold, which was prepared for Baal; therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the season thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax, given to cover her nakedness*: sayes God, I will strip her naked, and leave her bare. Unthankfulnesse provokes the Lord you see to take away all his mercies, and to strain for his Rent; but that is not all, for it provokes the Lord to inflict some spiritual judgement, when men are unthankful, *Rom.* 1. 21. & 24. *verses* compared together; its said, *Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkned. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodyes between themselves.* So that you see despising or undervaluing those outward blessings or mercies that God bestows upon a People, is a God-provoking sin, a sin of ingratitude.

Let me briefly apply this; for this is not the Point I intend principally to handle, but only to touch at it.

I beseech you my Brethren, Let every one of us enter into our own hearts, and by some serious, self-reflecting thoughts, call our selves to an ac-

count, whether we be not in the number of those that despise and undervalue those National mercies, wherewith God hath enricht us: We live in a pleasant Land, in a *Goshen* for light, in a *Canaan* for plenty; we live here in a City that is lifted up to Heaven, in mercies, in the use of Ordinances; I believe there is not such a place under the Heavens of God, not such a City, that hath such plentiful provisions both for soul and body, as we have: But have we walked worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing? have we liv'd up to our light, under our means, under our mercies? have we thankfully prized and improved these National priviledges and blessings that we enjoy? No, no, God knows, and our own hearts know, that it is not so. Alass, it may be said of these Nations, as it was said of the Land of *Canaan*, Ezra 9. 11. *The Land to which ye go to possesse, it is an unclean Land, with the filthiness of the People of the Lands, with their abominations which have filled it, from one end to another, with their uncleanness.* So may it be said of this pleasant Land, this goodly Land, this goodly City, that we live in; it is an unclean City, through the filthiness and abomination of many that live therein; and therefore that which God threatens, *Levit.* 18. 25. *And the Land it self vomiteth out her Inhabitants*; even so justly might our God deal with us, because we have defiled the Land with our abominations and uncleanness, therefore the Land should spew us out. We have swallowed down his mercies without regarding him that bestowed those mercies upon us; just like the Hog under the Acorn Tree, that swallows down the Mast, but does not look up to the Tree.

We

We have been a murmuring and discontented People, so looking upon one crosse, as to forget a thousand mercies; we have no way walked worthy of all the good things that our God hath given us to enjoy; therefore it were just that God should deal with us as he threatens, *Deut.* 28. 47, 48. *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladnesse of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemy, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee,* &c. Our unthankfulnesse is intolerable, the Lord awaken us to repentance; but I will not insist longer upon that Point.

I come therefore to the second Notion, Consider the Land of *Canaan*, as it was a Type, or Figure, or Pledge, or earnest-Penny of that same Heavenly Inheritance, that God hath laid up for the Saints in light, and so their ingratitude was far greater, they despised that pleasant Land, this was a grievous provocation indeed; so the Doctrine I shall give you from the words, considered in this notion or sense, is this.

Doct. *That despising, or undervaluing that Heavenly Inheritance that God hath prepared for the Saints in light, is a very grievous God-provoking sin, it is a sin of the first magnitude.*

For the proof of this Point, that one place of Scripture will be sufficient, *Heb.* 2. 2, 3. *For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence*

pense of reward; *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* By *Salvation* there, he means the Gospel, which is the cause of our Salvation; for it is observable, that both the Gospel of Grace, and Grace wrought by the Gospel, and Glory, which is the perfection of Grace, they all come under one name, *The Kingdome of God*, in Scripture; because those whom God by the Gospel brings to Grace, he will by Grace bring to Glory; now saves the Apostle, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* It is a marvelous strong Negation; he does not say, *We shall not escape*, or *hardly escape, if we neglect so great salvation*, but *How shall we escape?* It includes the strongest Negation that can be; as if he should say, *It is impossible for us to escape eternal Condemnation, if we do neglect so great Salvation*; not only if we do despise this eternal Salvation, but if we neglect it. Salvation it self will not save that man that despises or neglects it.

But for the clearing of this Point, that you may a little better understand it, there are these three Queryes I will endeavour to speak to, in opening of the Doctrine.

First, When may a man be said to despise, or undervalue that Heavenly Inheritance, that is prepared for the Saints in light.

Secondly, How comes it to passe, that men so lightly regard, and undervalue that eternal Salvation?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, How may it appear that this despising or undervaluing of this Heavenly Inheritance, is such a God-provoking sin?

First, When may a man be said to despise, or undervalue the Heavenly Inheritance, that is prepared for the Saints in light?

I shall answer this Query, and shew it you in these four Particulars.

First, Then doth a man despise and undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance, when he is an Earthly minded man, when he does over-value earthly things, and under-value Heavenly things; when he does set his affections so much on things below, that he cannot set his affections on things above; for these two are inconsistent, they cannot stand together, as appears by that in 1 *John* 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* As if he should say, *The love of God, and the love of the world, are inconsistent.* So in *Col.* 3. 2. *Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the Earth.* As if he had said, *If you set your affections on things below, you cannot set them on things above.* Now when a man prefers a present possession, before a future expectation; when he sayes, Give me a Bird in hand, rather than two in the Bush; give me the pleasures and profits, and honours, and contentments of this life, let me have present pay, but as for that glorious Inheritance that you speak of, for the time to come, let them look after it that will; as he said, *Let me have my part in Paris, let who will look after a part in Paradice.* This is an undervaluing of this Heavenly Inheritance.

Secondly,

Secondly, Then may a man be said to despise and undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance, when he is sluggish and sloathful, and will not stir up himself to take hold of God, when he will not set about those means that the Lord hath appointed for the attaining of those glorious hopes that are laid up in Heaven. True, nothing is to be done by us in a way of merit, but much is to be done in the use of means for the attaining of this eternal happinesse, (*Phil.* 2. 12.) *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* Mark, it is not said, *Work your salvation*, Christ hath wrought our salvation for us by way of merit, but we must work out our salvation in the use of means; Orig. κατεργάζεσθε, Work it out, as it were out of the fire. Now when a man will not be contented to take that pains that the Lord requires, in this working out of his salvation, when he sits still and is idle, or when he is sloathful and negligent in duty, when he does either neglect duty, or sleepily and carelesly perform every duty; this is a despising and undervaluing of this salvation: For you must know, the Kingdome of Heaven is compared to a *Race*, 1 Cor. 9. 24. and he that would win the Crown by first coming to the Goal, must run for it. It is compared to a *Kingdome*, Luke 13. 24. and he that would win it, must strive for it, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate*, Ἀγωνίζεσθε, Strive as in an agony. And its compared to a *Crown*, 1 Cor. 9. 25. and he that would obtain it, must fight for it. *I have fought a good fight*, (saith the Apostle) *I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousnesse, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day*, 2 Tim.

2 Tim. 4. 8. The Crown of Glory there, is called a Crown of Righteousnesse, not because it was merited by *Pauls* righteousnesse, you must not understand it so; but it is called *A Crown of Righteousnes*, because it was promised, and because it was purchased; it was freely promised by the Father, and it was fully purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, sayes he, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousnes, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day*; But sayes he, *I have fought a good fight* first, *and I have finished my course*. Now, when men will neither so run as that they may obtain, nor so strive as that they may gain a Kingdome, nor so fight that they may get a Crown that is laid up in Heaven for the Saints, then they may be said to despise and undervalue the Heavenly Inheritance. That is the second.

Thirdly, Then may a man be said to despise this Heavenly Inheritance, when he is a self-seeking Christian, or rather a pelting Chapman, (as I may so call him) that will not come up to the price of salvation, that will not be contented to take the pains that must be taken; if so be he may be the master of his own desires, then he would be content to enjoy those glorious hopes. But when a man will not with the wise Merchant, sell all, that he may buy this Pearl; for as Jesus Christ may be called *A Pearl of Price*, so may this Heavenly Inheritance be called *A Pearl*, though not of that price that Jesus Christ is of, yet a Pearl of price too. Now when men will not part with all, in case it come to that Point, to get this Pearl, they despise and undervalue this blessed Inheritance. Eve-

a man would be contented to come to Heaven, so he might come in his own way, on his own terms, and in his own time. If he may come to Heaven in his own way, that is Heaven and the world, Heaven and his lusts, Heaven and his own ends, and interests together: Or if he may have Heaven upon his own terms; namely, to live as he list, to take Jesus Christ as a Saviour, but not as a Prince, to take him as a Redeemer, but not as a Ruler: Or if he may have Heaven in his own time; namely, when he lyes upon his death Bed, when his sick Bed is ready to deliver him over to his cold Grave; but all his life long he would prosecute his own ends, and interest, and live to himself more than to Jesus Christ; every man on Earth would be contented to have Heaven on these terms. But now, when it comes to this, that a man that will have this Heavenly Inheritance, must have it in Christs way, in a way of holinesse, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 16. *And without holinesse none shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. And when it comes to this, that if a man will have Heaven, he must have it on Christs own terms, which is, that thou must be contented to serve me, as well as to be saved by me; and to be contented to be ruled by me, as well as to be redeemed by me; thou must be contented to bear my Crosse, as well as to wear my Crown. And when it comes to this, that a man must have Heaven in Christs own time, what time is that? *To day if ye will hear his voyce, harden not your hearts*, Heb. 3. 7. Put not off your repentance from day to day; set about the work with all your might; set about it without any further procrastination, or delay. Now here it sticks;

rather than men will have Heaven on these terms, they resolve they will never have Heaven, they will let it go.

Fourthly, Then may men be accounted, or said to despise Heaven, when Heaven is not accounted worthy those difficulties or discouragements that they must sustain in the pursuit of those glorious hopes. Thus was it with the *Israelites*; when the Spies came from *Canaan*, and told them, True, the Land is an excellent Land, but let's tell you, there are Giants, *Anakims*, walled Towns, there will be a great deal of difficulty before you get possession; and if you will possesse the Land, you must fight for it, it will cost you the lives of many of you, before you obtain it. Oh now, upon this report they were ready to stone *Caleb* and *Joshua*, those two that told them, that they were able to conquer the Inhabitants, and that they were but as bread for them, and their strength was departed; they were ready (I say) to stone them, when they heard of the difficulties of obtaining the Land of *Canaan*, and they would rather go back again into *Egypt*, than fight for *Canaan*; we will rather go back to our Leeks and Onions, and Garlick, than have this pleasant Land, if we must fight and adventure our lives for it. So here, when faint-hearted cowardly Christians hear, *that through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdome of God*, Acts 14. 22. *Yea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*, 2 Tim. 3. 12. And when they hear that truth which our Saviour tells them, *Mark* 8. 34. *If you will be my Disciples, you must take up your Cross and follow me*, As good Soldiers that follow their Captain,

despised, and

Captain, through dirt, and mire, and blood. And that they must be hated of all men for the sake of Jesus Christ, *Mat.* 10. 22. And that they must endure hardship in the world, *Mat.* 5. though their sorrow shall be turned into joy. Say they, if we cannot have Heaven but upon these terms, we will have none of it; we will rather have the pleasures of sin for a season; we will lye, and swear, and cozen, and cog, and flatter, and temporize, and swim with every stream, and lose the peace of our Consciences; we will rather choose to sleep in a whole skin, though with gauled Consciences, before we will have Heaven upon such terms; we will have our ease, we cannot abide difficulties and discouragements, which are in the way that leads to Heaven. This is a despising the pleasant Land. That is the first Query, When may a man be said to despise this Heavenly Inheritance. But in the second place,

Secondly, For Explication, How comes it to passe, that men are so ready to despise and to undervalue such a glorious Inheritance, *An Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in the Heavens,* 1 Pet. 1. 4. *A Kingdome that cannot be shaken,* Heb. 12. 28. to despise those glorious and unconceivable joyes, *that are at the right hand of God for evermore,* Psal. 16. 11. I professe a man would wonder that any, unlesse they were bereaft of their reason, unlesse they had lost their senses and feeling, that ever any man should part with such glorious hopes, hopes of such a glorious Inheritance, that surpasses what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or whatever the heart of man can conceive, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9.

But

But I will tell you the reason; the Reasons briefly are these.

First, Men despise this glorious Inheritance, because they know not the worth of it: Joh. 4.10. *Jesus answered, and said unto her, If thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* So, if men did but know what this Heavenly Inheritance is, Oh were they but with *Moses* (*Dut.* 32.49.) to stand upon Mount *Nebo*, to see this Land afar off, to see but a glimpse of it: Or if they were with *Paul* (2 *Cor.* 12.) wrapt up into Heaven one day, nay, but a few hours, they would adventure to get through the narrow Wicket, the narrow Dore, though an Angel with a drawn Sword kept the passage; as you read, an Angel did keep the Gate of Paradise, *Gen.* 3.24. If a man saw but one Glimpse of that eternal Glory, he would cry out as that Father, *Domine, hic affligas, hic corrigas, corpus maximis doloribus afficias*, &c. *modo in eternum parcas.* Oh Lord, Cut me here, wound me here, burn me here, let all the pains of Hell come upon my body, so my poor soul may be saved, so I may come to that eternal inheritance. But men are ignorant, and know not the worth of it, therefore they do not prize it.

Secondly, Men undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance, because they were never yet sufficiently humbled for their sins, they never had soul-shaking humiliation and conviction upon their Spirits, they never yet feelingly groaned under the burden of sin, they never tasted the bitterness of sin, they never yet considered the woful wages of sin. But if

God now ſhould but take ſuch a one by the neck, as he did *Job, and ſhake him to pieces, and ſet him up for a mark, and his Archers ſhould compaſs him round about; and cleave his Reins aſunder, and not ſpare him; and pour out his Gaul upon the ground, and break him with breach upon breach, and run upon him like a Gyant*, as *Job* complains, Chap. 16. verſ. 12, 13, 14. Oh, Chriſt now would be Chriſt indeed, Heaven now would be Heaven indeed; ſuch a one would ſay, Oh Lord, Do with me what thou pleaſeſt, ſo I may be but thine. But becauſe men were never yet thoroughly humbled, therefore they never prize this glorious Inheritance.

Thirdly, Becauſe men are bewitched with the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon; and why are they bewitcht with them? becauſe of the preſent enjoyment of them. *Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world*, (2 Tim. 4. 10.) and he loved it, becauſe it was preſent.

Fourthly, Becauſe men are rockt aſleep in the Cradle of ſecurity, the Devils Cradle: Satan makes them believe Heaven may be got with a wet Finger, and that they may come thither, whatſoever their courſe and converſation be; and that they may put off their repentance, to the laſt Year of their lives, nay, to the laſt Month of the laſt Year, nay, to the laſt day of the laſt Month, and that one day is as good as five thouſand, to make their peace with God in, and that it is a ſmall matter to repent, and that a *Lord have mercy upon thee*, will ſerve thy turn to bring thee to Heaven. That's the ſecond Query.

But Thirdly, The third Query is this, But how will it appear, that this deſpiſing and undervaluing this

this Heavenly Inheritance, is such a grievous God-provoking sin; I will tell you, it will appear thus; There are two Reasons I shall give you for it.

First, Because this despising of that Heavenly Inheritance, speaks men to be *Atheists*, it proves men to be *Atheists* to look at nothing but at things present, that look upon things that are seen, but never look upon things that are not seen: *Things that are seen, are temporal; but things that are not seen, are spiritual and eternal.* So I say, they look only at things present, and they measure their joy only by outward prosperity, and they measure their sorrow only by the want of it. Now what a dreadful thing is it for men to be *Atheists*!

Secondly, This despising or undervaluing of the Heavenly Inheritance, it provokes the Lord so to anger, that he swear in his wrath, such despisers shall never, never taste of that Inheritance, never enjoy that they have despised. Thus did God deal with those despising *Israelites*, those scornful *Israelites* in the Wilderness, that despised that pleasant Land. You may read the sad story, *Numb.* 14. 28, 29, 30. Sayes God, being exceedingly provoked to anger, *Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as you have spoken in mine ears, so will I do unto you; your carkasses shall fall in the Wilderness, and all that were numbred of you according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me; doubtless, ye shall not come into the Land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.* Not one of those thousands that I brought out of the Land of *Egypt*, not one of them shall

see the Land they despised. Just so will God deal with those that despise and undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance. Sayes the Lord, Have I prepared a Kingdome, an Everlasting Kingdome, a Kingdome of Glory? Have I prepared such things *as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive*? Have I prepared a place of infinite and unspeakable happinesse, such happinesse as all the Kingdomes of the world, and the beauty, and glory, and splendor, and pleasures of them, are not worthy to be a Picture of it? what, have I provided such a Crown, such a Kingdome? and do you undervalue it? do you not regard it? will you not tread in the way that leads to it? *As I live, saith the Lord, You shall never enter into my Rest, you shall never enjoy that Land, nor possesse it.* Thus I have opened the Point to you, and shewed you, that despising or undervaluing that Heavenly Inheritance that God hath prepared for the Saints in Light, is a very grievous God-provoking sin. Now briefly to apply it.

First *Use*, by way of Examination. Would it not be a very necessary enquiry, a very needful enquiry, for you, and me, and every one of us, in some serious self-reflecting thoughts, to call our selves to an account, whether we be in the number of those that despise, and undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance, yea or no? But it may be you will say, *We hope we are not such as despise, or undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance, God forbid we should be such Atheists.* But for Answer, Pray tell me, art thou one that overvalueſt Earth, and undervalueſt Heaven? Art thou one that sayest, I am so much taken

up

up with the world, ſo over head and ears in the world, I drive a Trade to provide for my Family; but to drive a Trade for Heaven, I have no leiſure, no leiſure; thou that ſayeſt thou haſt no leiſure to look after Heaven, thou wilt have leiſure enough to bewail the loſſe of Heaven; when thouſands of years are gone, and ten thouſand to that, and a hundred thouſand to that; all this while thou ſhalt be weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of thy teeth, for the loſſe of it. When thou preferreſt a preſent poſſeſſion, before a future expectation, do you not deſpiſe Heaven, and undervalue it? commune with your own hearts; is it not as I ſpeak? do I not ſpeak the hearts of ſome of you?

Again, Are you not ſloathful and ſecure? and do you not neglect thoſe means that God hath appointed? do you work out your ſalvation? do you ſo run that ye may obtain? do you fight the good fight of Faith? Examine your hearts, and ſee if you are not ſecure, and neglectful of the means God hath ordained, for the obtaining of this glorious and heavenly Inheritance. Remember the ſpeech of the Spies, *Judges* 18. 9. *For we have ſeen the Land, and behold it is very good; and are ye ſtill? Be not ſloathful to go, and to enter to poſſeſſe the Land.* The Land is an exceeding good Land, all things that can be deſired are there; and do you ſit ſtill? So may I ſay, here is a pleaſant Land, a glorious Land, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, here are *pleaſures at Gods right hand for evermore*, and do you ſit ſtill? will you not run? do you not ſtrive to enter?

Again, You ſay you do not undervalue Heaven; I beſeech you conſider, What are you content to part with for Heaven? will you ſell all to buy this Pearl? will you part with any thing that ſtands in oppoſition to your hopes? will you take Chriſt in his own way, and on his own terms, and in his own time? Can you be content to ſwallow down ſome diſcouragements, and difficulties, and temptations, and bleſſe God for them, and ſay, One ſmile of thy face will recompence a thouſand years of adverſity? If I have Chriſt for my portion, and Heaven in reverſion, though I carry a Rod of affliction at my back every day, though I am fed with the water of affliction, and with the bread of adverſity, Heaven will make amends for all. But alas! How many have weak hands, and feeble knees, and are not able to go on in the way of ſalvation, and will not come up to the price of ſalvation! do not deceive your ſelves. Theſe are plain down-right Truths, bottomed upon Scripture; if I ſpeak not the truth, believe me not; but if I do, ſome of you have cauſe with ſerious ſelf-reflection, to ſmite upon your Thighs, and you have cauſe greatly to fear this deſpiſing and undervaluing this Heavenly Inheritance, is your ſin, and Oh that it might be your ſorrow and ſhame.

Secondly, This Doctrine may juſtly ſerve for to reprove (and I profeſſe, I know no reproof ſharp enough for) ſuch perſons as deſpiſe and undervalue that Heavenly Inheritance, that God hath prepared for the Saints in Light. Let me ſay to ſome of you, as God ſpeaks, *Acts* 13.41. *Behold ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh.* So ſay I, hearken ye deſpiſers; hearken ye ſecure, careleſs, ſenſeleſs, ſottiſh

ſottiſh *Atheiſts*, (I can call you no better); Oh you that have ſuch ſlight thoughts of Heaven, you that look upon this Heavenly Inheritance but as imaginary, a Fools Paradiſe, or as a meer conceit, rather than any real or exiſtent thing; you that never yet ſet your hearts and ſouls to ſeek the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his Kingdome; you whoſe hearts are buried in Earth and Earthly things, who mind nothing but Earth, nothing in the world but raiſing great Eſtates, and ſatisfying the Brutiſh part of your ſelves: Tell me, do you think that ever you ſhall enjoy this eternal Inheritance which you have deſpiſed? Shall you ever taſt of that everlaſting happineſſe which you have ſo much undervalued? Will the Lord caſt Pearls before Swine? Will he hang ſuch a Jewel, ſuch an invaluable Jewel, which is better worth than ten thouſand worlds, will he hang ſuch a Jewel on a Swines ſnout? No, no, you deceive your ſelves, if you think ſo. Do you think that Heaven will drop in your mouths, as you lye a dying? Do you think our Saviour ſpeaks in vain, when he ſayes, *Matth.* 11. 12. *And from the dayes of John the Baptiſt, untill now, the Kingdome of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force?* If Heaven could be purchaſ'd with a *Lord have mercy upon us*, if it could be procured in ſuch a cold, lazie, luke-warm way, as you walk in, then certainly our bleſſed Saviour did not know what he ſaid, his exhorting to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, was to no purpoſe. But if prizing of this ſalvation, and ſtriving for this ſalvation, if fighting for this ſalvation to the end of your lives, if theſe muſt go before enjoying, then aſſure as the Lord lives, you careleſſe, ſecure, ſot-

tiſh ſinners, that mind nothing leſſe than that one thing neceſſary, aſſure your ſelves, you ſhall never have a portion in that Inheritance which is prepared for the Saints in light; no, there is another place prepared for ſuch Dogs and Swine, (as they are called,) that place *without*, Rev. 22. 15. *For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murtherers, and Idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lye.* You all cry out of *Eſau* a prophane wretch, the Spirit of God brands him for it, a prophane *Atheiſt*, that ſold his Birth-right for a Meſſe of Pottage; he ſold his Birth-right which was a Type of Heaven, he ſold this for an old ſong, (as we ſay.) And you that neglect, and undervalue, and deſpiſe Heaven, you are guilty of the ſame ſin, and have you not as prophane ſpirits as he? You cry out of *Judas* becauſe he ſold his Maſter for thirty pieces of ſilver. Oh hearken impenitent ſottiſh ſinner! it may be thou ſelleſt Chriſt, and Heaven, and Glory, and all, may be for a baſe luſt, a baſe lye, thou ſelleſt it for ſome inconſiderable advantage, as thou conceiveſt, for the preſent, though at laſt it will be like Gravel in the Throat. Take home this Reproof with you; the Lord ſet it home upon your ſouls, you that never ſet your hearts and ſouls to ſeek the Lord.

I have done with a word of Exhortation: That is, I beſeech you, and exhort you, in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you would take heed of this God-provoking, ſoul-damning ſin, take heed of undervaluing this Heavenly Inheritance: Let it not be ſaid of any of you, that you deſpiſed the pleaſant Land; inſtead of deſpiſing it, do you highly prize it, and ſay as *David*,

Pſal.

Psal. 119. 174. *I have longed for thy Salvation, O Lord, and thy Law is my delight.* And what a kind of longing was it? Not a cold wish, such a wish as *Balaam* had, *O that I might dye the death of the Righteous*, that Heaven might drop into my mouth then, but I would live as I list; it was not such a desire, no, sayes *David*, *I have longed for thy Salvation*; what then? *Thy Law is my delight.* That is a right longing, that is accompanied with an endeavour; he rightly longs for the Salvation of God, that delights in the Commands of God. In the 123. *vers.* of the same Psalm, *Mine eyes fail in waiting for thy Salvation.* Look as the Lord Jesus Christ will never bestow himself upon that soul that does not pant, and breath, and break with longing desires after him: So likewise, he will never bestow this Heavenly Inheritance upon that soul that does not most earnestly, wishfully, and industriously pant after him, and long for him, and seek him, that you may prize him. Take heed, in the fear of God, of those four causes of undervaluing this salvation.

First, Take heed of Earthly-mindedness; beg that you may be digged out of the thick Mire and Clay; say, Give me not my portion here, O Lord: How sad will it be with me, if thou putteſt me off only with these outward things!

Secondly, Take heed of sloathfulness and sluggishness in the service of God, and in seeking this salvation, *Rom.* 12. 11. *Not sloathful in business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.* Seek the Lord, and seek his Salvation, with all your might, mind and strength.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Be content to part with any thing for Chriſt; take heed of placing your love upon the Creature; be content to part with any thing that ſtands in oppoſition to, or in competition with, thoſe glorious hopes that are laid up for the Saints in Light.

Fourthly, Be contented to endure ſome hardſhip in the way; Heaven will make amends for all; all the coſts, diſcouragements, and difficulties that you [illegible] with in the purſuit of your hopes, will be abundantly recompenced by one hours fruition of that eternal happineſſe.

Secondly, If you would not deſpiſe or undervalue that Heavenly Inheritance, learn to live by Faith, and not by ſight and ſenſe; if you live by ſight and ſenſe, you will look *on the things that are ſeen, and not on the things that are not ſeen; the things that are ſeen are temporal, but the things that are not ſeen are eternal*, 2 Cor. 4. 18. If you live by Faith, you will fetch your comforts from Chriſt, more than from any thing in the Creature.

Thirdly, If you would not deſpiſe this pleaſant Land, then beg of Jeſus Chriſt, that he would draw your ſouls, that you may run after him. Quicken me with thy quickning-grace, for thy name ſake; Lord, beſtow thy quickning-grace upon me, that I may mind the buſineſſe of eternity, ſeriouſly. Lord help me to ſet about the work vigorouſly, that I may not trifle with thee in matters that are of infinite concernment. I remember the ſpeech of a Martyr, a good woman, at that time when profeſſion of the Goſpel was enough to bring to the ſtake; ſayes ſhe, *I hear there are Crowns and*

King-

Kingdomes to be disposed of this day; here take my childe, I will put in for one Crown, for one Kingdom. Oh that every one of us had hearts to do as she did; let us be contented to suffer hardship for a while, that we may enjoy the pleasant Land for ever and ever.

So much for the first Branch of the Text, that is the horrible ingratitude of this people, *They despised the pleasant Land.* The ground of that ingratitude you have in the next words of the Text, *And believed not his Word.* But so much for this time.

PSAL. 106. 24.

——*And believed not his Word.*

I Have spoken to this Text in one Sermon already, as you may remember; in it I took notice of two Branches.

First, *Israels* horrible ingratitude, in these words, *They despised the pleasant Land*; and that I finished last day.

Now I come to the second Branch of the Text, that is the ground of their ingratitude, in these words, *They believed not his Word.* What word? They believed not the promise that God had made unto them, that he would bestow the Land of *Canaan upon them*; nay, God did not only promise it, but he sware unto *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, Gen. 50. 24. *And Joseph said unto his Brethren,*

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I dye, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this Land, to the Land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob. But because the Spies forsooth came and told them, Oh there are walled Cityes, and Giants, and *Anakims* to fight with, and it is impossible for you to get possession of the Land; therefore they believed the Spies, but they would not believe God; they believed the report of those that told them of the Giants, but they would not believe Gods report, they would not believe Gods promise. So the Doctrine I shall commend to you from this second Branch of the Text, is this.

Doct. *One main Reason why men do undervalue the Heavenly Canaan, and so come short of it, is their unbelief.*

Look as it was with the Children of *Israel*, here spoken of in the Text, the sin that made them despise and undervalue the Land of *Canaan*, and so were debar'd and shut out of the Land of *Canaan*, was their unbelief, as the Apostle shews expressly, *Heb.* 3. *ult. So we see they could not enter in, because of unbelief.* So here, one main reason why men undervalue the Heavenly *Canaan*, and so come short, or are deprived of that Heavenly *Canaan*, it is their unbelief; men believe lyes, but they will not believe the truth; they believe the Devil, who is a lyar, that tells them they may come to Heaven with a wet finger, and therefore they may live as they list; but they will not believe the Lord Jesus Christ, that tells them, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life,*

life, and few there be that find it, Math. 7. 14. They believe the father of lyes, but they will not believe him that is the God of truth, who sayes, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able*, Luke 13. 24. They believe the report of Satan, but they will not believe the report of the word of God, which tells us expresly, 1 *Pet.* 4. 18. *And if the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?* They will not believe that Doctrine (which you may remember) I proved out of *Heb.* 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entring into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* Where I shewed you, that the life of a Christian is a life of fear; and that in matters of soul concernment, Christians should not only be very jealous of themselves, but of others also. I also shewed you, that it is possible for many that are Professors of the Truth, or true Religion, to come short of Heaven; and that it is possible for many that are confident that they are in a state of grace, to come short of Heaven; and that it is possible for many to come very neer to Heaven, and yet to come short of Heaven. But men will not believe these Truths; now their unbelief is the cause why they slight Heaven, and shall be deprived of Heaven. For the better Explication of this Doctrine, there are two things I shall open to you.

First, What this unbelief is, that makes men so undervalue the Heavenly *Canaan?*

Secondly, Why this unbelief is such a great and grievous sin, so dangerous and destructive, that it deprives men of that Heavenly *Canaan?*

First,

First, What this unbelief is, that makes men slight the Heavenly *Canaan*? For answer to this, you must know there is a twofold unbelief.

There is a Negative
And
There is a Positive
} unbelief.

First, There is a Negative unbelief; and that is the sin of *Pagans* and Heathens, that never heard of God, nor of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; they believe not, because they know not, they know not God, *Rom.* 10. 14. *How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?* This is the sin of *Pagans*; this ignorance it excuses in part, though not in whole, their sin is not so great by far, as the sin of those that do professe the Gospel; yet their Negative unbelief is a sin, because Gods Commandement is, that we should believe on the name of Jesus Christ, 1 *John* 3. 23. *And this is his Commandement, that we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.* But this is the Negative unbelief, this concerns not us, but it concerns those that know not God.

Secondly, There is a Positive unbelief; and this is when men are ready to distrust Gods Power, and his Providence, and his Promises; or when we do not so fiducially rest upon them, as to obey the Gospel. This is Positive unbelief; this is the sin which is so dangerous. Now you must know this Positive unbelief is twofold.

First, Temporary.

Secondly, Total or Final.

First, There is a temporary unbelief; and this is that which may befall even Gods own Elect, they

they may be under unbelief for a while. True, it is possible for an Elect Child of God, to be under an act of unbelief, though he cannot be brought into a state of unbelief; for you must distinguish between these two, between a state of unbelief, and an act of unbelief. A Child of God may be under an act of unbelief; so you know was Godly *Zachariah* (*Elizabeths* husband) he was under an act of unbelief: *And behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak untill the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season*, Luke 1. 20. And *Thomas*, one of the Twelve Apostles, he was under an act of unbelief, when he said, *Unlesse I shall see in his hands the print of the Nailes, and put my finger into the print of the Nailes, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe*, John 20. 25. So were all the rest of the Apostles under an act of unbelief for a while; therefore our Saviour when he was risen again, he upbraided them (the Text sayes) with their unbelief, *Mark* 16. 14. *After he appeared to the Eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardnesse of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.* This is a Temporary unbelief.

Secondly, There is a Total or Final unbelief, and that is the sin of those that live in a state of impenitency, and abide in that condition; those that abide in their unbelief, until the wrath of God abides upon them. You see what this unbelief is, a distrusting of Gods Power, and Providences, and Promises; and that not for a time, which may be the condition of a Child of God; but when it is a

Total

Total and Final unbelief. That's the first thing for Explication.

Secondly, By way of Explication; it may be demanded, why is this such a dangerous and destructive sin, that it does debarre men of this Heavenly *Canaan*. I shall give you these three Reasons of it.

First, Because you must know it is a sin that robs God of his Glory. Look as by believing we do most of all honour God; for by this we set to our seal that he is True, *John* 3. 33. *He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true.* By believing, we give him the honour of his Truth, and Faithfulness, and Mercy, and Goodness, and Power. Thus *Abraham* by believing gave glory to God, in *Rom.* 4. 20. *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.* So on the contrary, by unbelief we dishonour him in a high degree, nay, in the highest degree that can be named, because we make him a Lyar, 1 *John* 5. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witnesse in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a lyar, because he believeth not the Record that God gave him of his Son.* Now what greater reproach or dishonour can be cast upon a man of worth, than to give him the lye? Unbelief therefore is a bold sin; it steps into Gods Cabinet, as I may say, and it robs him of the choicest Jewel that he hath, namely, his glory, which he hath said, he will not give to another, *Isa.* 42. 8. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to the graven Images.* The Glory of God, it is nothing

else

else, but that reputation that God hath in the world. Take away Gods glory, and the reputation that he hath among the Sons of men, then (with reverence be it spoken) he is little worth in the eyes of men. Now unbelief is that, that robs God of his glory.

Secondly, Unbelief is such a dangerous destructive sin, because it is the first sin that ever was in the world. As it is the mother of all other sins, so it was the first sin whereby the Devil got entrance into the heart of man. I know there is a dispute amongst Divines, what was the first sin our first Parents were guilty of, whether pride, or unbelief; without all doubt it was unbelief, for God told our first Parents expressely, when-ever they did eat of *the Tree of Life, they should dye the death*; as sure as they lived, they should dye; but the Devil he goes and tels them, *You shall not dye*. Now mark, they believed the Devil, more than they believed God: Unbelief therefore was the first sin that ever was committed in the world; and as it was the first sin whereby the Devil got entrance into the heart of man, so may it be said to be the root and mother of all other sins; therefore sayes the Apostle, *Take heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*, Heb. 3. 12. Look as Faith may be said to be the Mother of all other Graces, because Faith lets in Jesus Christ into the Soul, and so purifies the heart, *Acts* 15. 9. *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by Faith*. It applyes the purifying blood of Jesus Christ. So on the other side, unbelief may be said to be the mother of all other sins, because it keeps

out Christ, and keeps out grace, and polutes the heart, and defiles it, and makes it no better than a Den for Satan to lodge in. It is a good observation of an eminent Divine, whom for honour sake I mention, namely, Doctor *Sibbs*, *Look as the first return of the Soul to God, is by Faith, so the first departing of the Soul from God, is by Unbelief*; for, from thence comes a departing to other sins; and so unbelief being encreased, the rent that is made between God and the Soul, the estrangement between God and the Soul, is still made wider and wider; and so the Soul departs further and further, and is still departing and departing from one sin to another, till at last it comes to hear that fatal and final sentence, *Math.* 25. *Depart thou cursed wretch into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Well therefore may unbelief be said to be the Mother of all other sins. Unbelief and apostacy are very neer akin. Unbelief may in some sence be said to be all disobedience. The same Greek word that signifies unbelief, signifies also disobedience, *Col.* 3. 6. *For these things sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of unbelief*, or *children of disobedience.* And well may it be said to be the Mother of disobedience, for what sin is there so grosse and grievous, that an Unbeliever will not run into. If a man believe not the threatnings, he will shun no evil; if he believe not the Promises, he will practice no good: For example, if a man do but believe that terrible Scripture, *Rev.* 21. 8. *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Lyars, shall have their part in the*

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Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death. If a man did believe that Scripture, durst he be a Coward to betray the Truths of God? God speaks of the fearful ones in that sense, to be cowardly Christians; did he believe this, durst he be such an abominable wretch, to run into such abominable blasphemies (which are not to be named) which are belched out against God in these dayes? Durst he be an Idolater, a Lyar, a Swearer? certainly he durst not; but he does not believe the Threatnings of God. If a terrible Tyrant should threaten any of you, with the Rack, or Strapado, which would break your bones, Oh what terror and trembling would take hold of you! how would you fall down at his feet, and seek his face and favour! yet that Tyrant could take away nothing but a poor, miserable, mortal life: But the great God of Heaven, he threatens sinners with the punishment of losse, the losse of his presence, of his favour, of fellowship with him in Glory; nay, he threatens with the punishment of sense, those unconceivable tortures and torments in Hell for ever, to all eternity; and yet sinners do not tremble at this great God, they do not fall down and seek his face and favour; what is the reason? because they believe not. If so be a faithful man, that was never yet known to break his word, and a man of a great estate, that was able to make good his promise, if he should promise any of you an Inheritance of two or three hundred by the year, you would believe that man on his word, and you would seek to please him, you would prize his favour; but now the great God of Heaven and Earth, that was never yet known to

break his Word, he tells you of an Heavenly Inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, reſerved in Heaven; and yet you do not ſeek to pleaſe him, or prize his favour, or obey him; what's the reaſon? *Becauſe you believe not his Word.* So the truth is, unbelief is the Mother of all diſobedience. That's the ſecond Reaſon?

Thirdly, Unbelief is a ſin thus dangerous and deſtructive to the Soul, becauſe God hath provided more Antidotes and Remedies againſt this ſin of unbelief, than againſt any other ſin, to cure this ſin of unbelief.

Firſt, God hath given us his Word, which is a moſt faithful Word, *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſſe away* (ſaith our Saviour) *but my words ſhall not paſſe away*, Math. 24. 35.

Secondly, God hath given us his Promiſes: Now all his Promiſes are *ſure and certain*, *Yea and Amen*; God is faithful, and will make good his promiſes, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. *For all the promiſes of God in him are Yea, and in him are Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

Thirdly, He hath given us his Covenant, and this Covenant is ſure and ſtedfaſt, and ordered in all things, an everlaſting Covenant, ſealed with the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and cannot be altered, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. *Although my Houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure; for this is all my Salvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow.*

Fourthly, He hath given us his Oath, *Ezek.* 16. 8. *Yea, I ſware unto thee, and entred into a Covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt*

cameſt mine. Now an Oath you know is the ſtrongeſt bond of aſſurance between man and man. And the Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Word of God, and of the Oath of God, that they are two immutable things, wherein it is impoſſible for God to lye, *Heb. 6. 17, 18. Wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the Heirs of the Promiſe, the immutability of his Counſel, confirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us.* As it is impoſſible for God to dye, becauſe he is life it ſelf; ſo it is impoſſible for God to lye, becauſe he is Truth it ſelf.

Fifthly, Becauſe he hath given us his Seal alſo; he hath given us his outward Seal, which is the Sacraments, both the Sacrament of Baptiſme, and the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; he hath given us alſo his inward Seal, which is the witneſſe and teſtimony of his own bleſſed Spirit, *ſealing us up to the day of Redemption.*

Sixthly, He hath given us Experiences; former Experiences, and latter Experiences, the Experience of all the Saints that have gone before us, *Pſal. 22. 4. Our Fathers truſted in thee; they truſted, and thou didſt deliver them.* So in *Pſal. 34. 6. This poor man cryed,* (ſpeaking of himſelf) when he was in as low a condition as ever he was in, (ſcrabling on the ground, and feigning himſelf mad, 1 *Sam.* 21. 13.) ſayes he, *This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and ſaved him out of all his troubles:* Therefore others will be exceeding glad, when they hear how graciouſly he hath dealt with me, So in *Pſal. 9. 10. They that know*

thy Name will put their trust in thee, for thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee. Now God hath given us Experiences, he hath given us all these Antidotes and Preservatives against unbelief; hearken therefore, O Unbeliever! Well, if thou do not believe, thou must perish everlastingly; God remains faithful, and cannot deny himself, 2 *Tim.* 2. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* But if thou do believe and perish, if thou do believe, and yet art damned, then God hath broken his Word, and broken his Promise, and broken his Covenant, and broken his Oath, and broken the Seals of his Covenant, which is as impossible as for God to cease to be God. You see God hath provided so many Remedies and Antidotes against unbelief, therefore unbelief is such a dangerous and destructive sin. It is observable, when our Saviour came to his own Countrey, that was *Nazareth*, and preacht to his own Countrey-men, and did miracles among them, *they believed not*, the Text sayes, *Mark* 6. 6. *He marvelled because of their unbelief.* You do not read he marvelled at other sins, as ignorance, hypocrisie, pride, covetousnesse, *&c.* but our Saviour *marvelled at their unbelief.* Oh when men shall sin against the Word of God, and the Promise of God, and the Covenant of God, and the Oath of God, and the Seal of God, Heaven and Earth may stand amazed at their incredible incredulity. Thus you see the Point opened.

For the *Use* and *Application* of the Point.

First, By way of *Examination*: I beseech you to bring your hearts to the Touch-stone, and see whether you be not guilty of this sin of unbelief, yea,

yea or no. I know every one of you will be ready to plead, Not guilty; Oh we do believe the Word of God, and pity we should live if we did not believe the Word: But let me tell you, This is an inward, secret, lurking sin, therefore not easily discerned. But that you may know whether you be guilty of this sin or no, I will give you these four plain undeniable Scripture Evidences; the Lord make you your own Judges in this particular.

First, When men do slight the invitations of Jesus Christ, slight the proffers of his Grace, it is a token there is unbelief at the bottome; for where Faith is once wrought in the heart, there is instantly and readily, a closing between Christ and the Soul; there is as ready a closure, as there is between the Load-stone and the Iron: When Jesus Christ sayes to a poor sinner, *Come to me, though thou art weary and heavy laden*, the believing Soul closes presently with Christ, and answers, *Come to thee Lord, I, I will creep to thee upon my hands and feet*: When Christ sayes to it again, *Do this*, or *Do that*; the Soul sayes again, *O Lord, give me strength to do what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt*. But now when you find in you a backwardness to entertain Jesus Christ in your hearts, this is a certain and undeniable evidence of your unbelief; and is not this your sin? Alass, alass, let Jesus Christ be tendred in the Ministry of the Word, from day to day; let him be proffered in the sweetest and softest terms of Perswasions, and Exhortations; let Ministers use their best Art and Arguments, to woe, entreat, invite, and beseech you to accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is tendred to you in the Gospel, and yet alass, we poor Ministers

nisters can get no audience; I speak of the most of you, not of all; scarce one of ten, scarce one of a hundred, will hearken to this Gospel-invitation, to come unto Jesus Christ, and to submit to him, and to take him upon Gospel-terms. Our Saviour complains, in *John* 5. 40. *And ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life.* Though I would give you life, a life of Righteousnesse, a life of Grace, a life of Glory, *Yet you will not come to me*; that is, You will not believe in me, you will not embrace me, you will not submit to me, you will not solace your Souls in me. Let the world call, and you run straight; let the flesh call, and you obey it straight in the lusts of it; nay, let Satan call, and you readily hearken to him; but you will not hearken to me. Just so may the Ministers of the Gospel at this day complain, Lord, thou sendest us upon this Errand, to bring sinners into thee, thou sendest us upon the same Message *Abraham* sent his Servant, to get a Wife for his Son *Isaac*: *Abraham* gave his Servant Rings, and Jewels, and Bracelets, to bestow upon her that should be Wife to *Isaac*. So our Lord sends us with Rings, and Jewels, and Bracelets; we have many Motives and Arguments, to invite sinners, and to perswade and draw them, but Lord, we can do no good in our Ministry; we tell men of the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, and what an unvaluable portion they shall have with him, but they will not believe, *Lord, Who hath believed our Report?* Now when there is a slighting of those invitations, and proffers of Gospel-Grace, it is a certain token of unbelief. And that's the first Sign or Character of unbelief.

Secondly,

Secondly, When men undervalue Christs person, and portion; this is a token of unbelief. We tell men of the beauty of Christs person, that he is white and ruddy; white in his innocency, and ruddy in his passion, the choicest of ten thousand, *Cant.* 5. 10. and that there is nothing in him but brightnesse, and sweetnesse, and beauty, and fulnesse, and all-sufficiency, yet men believe it not, *They see no beauty in him, why they should desire him*, Isa. 53. 3. *Nay, what is thy Beloved more than other Beloveds?* say they, *Cant.* 5. 9. So when we tell men of the invaluable portion they shall have by the Lord Jesus Christ, those unsearchable riches, the riches of his merits, and the riches of his Spirit, and that rich and royal Redemption, and that they shall have whatever their hearts can desire; we tell them of this, they shall have a portion of grace, Jesus Christ will give them grace for grace; for every grace in himself, he will give them part of it; by his Wisdome, they shall be made wise; by his Holinesse, they shall be made holy; he will give them a portion of Glory, a Crown of Eternal Glory to them that love him; but because they see not this portion, this Crown of Glory, they will not believe it, they will not believe further than they see, they are all for present pay, *Demas hath forsaken me, having embraced this present world*; They will have good things for present, as for future expectations, they regard them not. Where there is an undervaluing of Christs person, or portion, there is a great deal of unbelief.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, When men are secure and fearless, it is a certain effect and sign and symptom of unbelief; for Faith breeds fear, *Heb.* 11. 7. *By Faith Noah being warned of God, of things not seen, as yet moved with fear, prepared an Ark, to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the World, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* Faith makes men fear. But now when men do not stand in awe of God, of the great God, that is within us, without us, above us, about us, when we do not walk as in his eye, nor walk as in his presence, when men do not stand in awe of the Word of God, and say with *David*, Psal. 119. 161. *Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy Word.* As if he should say, I more stand in awe of thy Word, than of all the Princes in the world. When men are so over-awed by the Word of God, as that they dare not sin against God; for the Word of God stands as a School-Master stands, with a Rod in his hands over a boy, so that he dare not act any untowardness. When men are not over-awed by the Word, but they sin and spare not, they sin and grieve not, this is a token of their unbelief; they do not believe God is omniscient, omnipresent, they do not believe his Justice, they do not believe his Truth. Where men are thus fearless and secure, it is a plain token of their exceeding great unbelief.

Fourthly, A fourth Sign of unbelief is this, When men profess one thing, and practise another thing; when their practise crosses their Profession, this is a certain token of reigning unbelief. Let me give you some instances: For example, You profess God to be your Soveraign Lord, and King, and Law-giver,

giver, and that you have but one Law-giver, which is God, and that he has power to save and to destroy, *James* 4. 12. *There is one Lawgiver, who hath power to save and to destroy.* And you profess, *That he can do whatsoever he pleaseth in Heaven and in Earth, and among all the Inhabitants of the Earth; and that none can stay his hand, none can say unto him, what dost thou?* Dan. 4. 35. You profess this God to be your Soveraign, yet for all this you make no bones of slighting his Authority; you dare slight the Authority of this Law-giver, & make no bones of breaking his Commandments. You can break the first Commandment by Atheism, impenitency, hardness of heart, lukewarmness, unthankfulness: You can break the second Commandment, by neglecting or mis-performing the Duties of Gods Worship and Service; You can break the third Commandment, by not honouring God, by not glorifying God; you do not sanctifie and honour his Name, in his Word, in his Works, in his Providences, in his Ordinances, in his Mercies. You make no bones I say of breaking his Commands. Thus you profess one thing, you say that the Lord is your Lord, your Law-giver; but you practice another, when you slight his Authority, and break his Commands. See how angrily our Saviour speaks, *Luke* 6. 46. *And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I command you?* ——— Again, you profess you believe the threatnings of God, such dreadful threatnings as these: *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the Portion of their Cup,* Psal. 11. 6. So *Psal.* 68. 21. *God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy*

hairy ſcalp of ſuch a one as goeth on ſtill in his treſpaſſes. You profeſs you believe theſe threatnings, but yet notwithſtanding your practice croſſes your Profeſſion; for let a Miniſter come and thunder theſe threatnings in your ears, yea let a Miniſter come and ſpit fire & vengeance in the face of a ſinners, yet notwithſtanding, he does no more tremble than the ſeat he ſits on. It were well if ſome ſinners had but as much fear as the Devils have, (*James* 2.19.) for they believe the threatnings of God, and fear them, and know they ſhall be accompliſhed to the uttermoſt.

Thirdly, You profeſs that you believe the Promiſes, I, that you do; I, but what Promiſes do you believe? you believe the Promiſe of eternal life, becauſe you believe Jeſus Chriſt will be your Saviour: I, but do you believe the Promiſes (for example) for this life? do you believe, if you ſeek the Kingdome of God, and his righteouſneſs, in the firſt place, all other things ſhall be caſt into the bargain, *Math.* 6.33. Again, do you believe that promiſe, *Pſal.* 34. 10. *The young Lyons do lack, and ſuffer hunger; but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing.* Do you believe the Promiſes for this life, let that be judged by your covetouſneſs, by your carking carefulneſs, that diſtracting, dividing care, that divides the mind from it ſelf. See what the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſayes, *Iſa.* 28. 16. *He that believeth ſhall not make haſt*: He therefore that does make haſt to be rich, does not believe. *He that makes haſt to be rich, ſhall not be innocent*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 28. 20. You therefore that make ſo much haſt to be rich, you that make ſo much buſſling in the World, wherefore is this

craving,

craving, carking, whining, after the things of this life? it is a certain undeniable evidence of your distrusting Gods Providence and Promises; and let me tell you, you that will not believe him for the body, you will never believe him for the soul; you that will not believe him for your Estates and Children, you will never believe him for your Eternal Salvation; you that will not believe him for a Crust, you will never believe him for a Crown: And yet you say you believe his Promises, that you do.

Fourthly, You say you believe in the mercy of God for pardon: I, but when once Satan comes to shake your confidence, but a little, when you lye but under any temptation, when God seems to hide away his face from you, though never so little, in the day of your fears and straits; then you are ready to question whether you are the children of God, or no; whether there be any thing of God in you, or no; you are ready to say then as *Sion* did, *Isa.* 49. 14. *The Lord hath forsaken me, my Lord hath forgotten me*; my way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment from the Almighty. It may be you may come to that condition, to say with *Cain, My punishment is greater than I can bear, my sin is greater than can be forgiven*, Gen. 4. God will never forgive such great sins as mine are. You say that you believe in the mercy of God, but when it comes to the tryal, it will be found no such matter.

Fifthly, Again, You say you believe a day of Judgment, this is one thing you profess; I, but your practise is quite contrary, for did you believe it seriously, then you would *pass the time of your sojourn*

sojourning here in fear, 1 Pet. 1. 17. Did you believe it seriously, then you would be affected with it, as that ancient Father was, *Whether I eat, or drink, or whatever I do, me-thinks I hear the Trumpet sounding in mine ears, Arise ye dead, and come to Judgement.* If you did believe *the terror of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. certainly then you would exercise your selves to *have Consciences void of offence both towards God and men*, Acts 24. 16.

Sixthly, You say you believe that there will be a Resurrection of the Body, and yet notwithstanding you carry your selves here upon the Earth, as if so be there was no account or reckoning to come. Some may be can live, (I am even ashamed to speak it) they can live as if they had no God to serve, and no Souls to save; as if there would never come a day wherein they must appear before their Judge. I remember the speech of St. *Paul* to King *Agrippa*, Acts 26. 27. *King Agrippa, Believest thou the Prophets, I know* (saies he) *that thou believest.* But I may say to many an impenitent, unregenerate, obstinate, perverse sinner (Oh that there were none such in this Congregation; I may say to many such sinners) believest thou the Word of God? Believest thou the Threatnings of God? I know thou believest them not. If thou didst believe the Commands of God, O then thou wouldest say with St. *Paul, What wouldest thou have me to do Lord?* Acts 9. 6. *Teach me the way of thy Statutes, O Lord, and I will walk in it, and I will keep it to the end*, Psal. 119. 33. If thou didst believe the Threatnings of God, then thou wouldest be in the same condition that *David* was in, *Psal.* 119. 12. *My flesh trembleth for*

fear

fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgements, If thou didst believe those dreadful Threatnings, thou wouldest be in the same condition with the Prophet *Habakkuk*; *My belly trembled, my lips quivered, rottenness entred into my bones, and I trembled in my self*, Hab. 3. 16. —— If so be thou didst believe the Promises, O thou wouldst embrace them, thou wouldst suck and be satisfied with those Breasts of *Consolation*, Isa. 66. 11. It is said of the Patriarchs, *They saw the Promises afar off, and embraced them*, Heb. 11. 13. But now, when thou sayest thou believest the Commands of God, and yet never obeyest his Commands; thou sayest, thou believest his Threatnings, and yet never trembleſt at any Threatning; thou sayest, thou believest the Promises, and yet are no way thereby encouraged to a more active, and fruitful, and cheerful walking with God; their thy belief crosses thy profession. And this is a certain and undeniable Evidence of unbelief; the Lord awaken some of you, and convince you, and send you home to your own hearts, to see how deeply you stand guilty of this sin my Text speaks of; for if there be not reigning unbelief in many of you, for my part I do not understand the Scripture.

I shall close with a word of *Exhortation*.

Is it so, *That unbelief is one main cause why so many men despise and undervalue that Heavenly Canaan, and are debarr'd from that Heavenly Canaan?* Then I have a twofold *Exhortation* to tender to you. The

First is to those that are Regenerate.

Secondly, To those that are Unregenerate.

First,

First, To those that are Regenerate: And my Counsel to you is this, O do you mourn for the dregs of this sin that yet remain in you; there are dregs of unbelief, even in those that are true Believers. That man or woman that is not sensible of the dregs of this sin in him, I say then he is a stranger to his own heart, in *Heb.* 13. 5. sayes the Apostle, *Let your Conversation be without Covetousnesse, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* There you have a Promise, *He hath said*; who is it hath said it? The Great God of Heaven and Earth, that can make it good; how hath he said it? how? with the greatest earnestnesse or asseveration, that ever Promise was made; for he that hath skill in the Greek Tongue, shall find there five Negatives in that one Promise, οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ, οὐδ', οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω *I will not forsake thee*; that is not enough, but sayes God, *be assured I will not forsake thee, no, no, no, no, I will not forsake thee*; so many No's, therefore be assured. As if the Lord should say it as the greatest Asseveration, and with the greatest earnestnesse, that ever we read of any Promise made with. Yet let me tell you, (and it is what you will find by your own experience:) Though in time of prosperity it is an easie matter to presume, yet in time of adversity it is a hard matter to believe this Promise; when we come into straitnesse, to say, God will not leave me, nor forsake me, he will not leave me in the Briars, nay, though you and I have had experience of Gods faithfulnesse to this day; we had experience of his faithfulnesse when we were in our Mothers womb. As a Learned man once said,

ſaid, *If a man ſhould live to the dayes of Methuſelah, if he ſhould live a thouſand years, he could never have that experience of Gods power, and tender mercy to him, as he had when God preſerved him in his mothers womb, and took him out of his mothers belly.* We have had experience of Gods preſerving us then, and we have lived upon him ever ſince, ſome twenty, ſome thirty, ſome forty, ſome fifty years; all this time God did never leave us, nor forſake us: yet if we be in ſtraits, we find it a very hard matter to believe that one Promiſe, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* Oh therefore bewail, and bemoan the dregs of unbelief, cry out with that good man, *Lord I believe, I would believe, help my unbelief.* That's the firſt *Exhortation.*

Secondly, I have an *Exhortation* to thoſe that are in a ſtate of unbelief, unregenerate, impenitent wretches, that go on in ſin, and will not be reclaimed, that ſlight the invitations of Jeſus Chriſt, and the proffers of his Grace; my Counſel to you is this, and I have but two words of Counſel to tender to you.

Firſt, Be ſenſible of this ſin.

Secondly, Labour to get this ſin removed.

Firſt, Be ſenſible of this ſin; be ſenſible of the greatneſſe of it, be ſenſible of the hainous nature of it; what, to turn the Truth of God into a Lye, what, to make the great God of Heaven and Earth a Lyar; what to rob him of his Glory; what, to go into his Cabinet, and ſteal away his chiefeſt Jewel; can there be a greater ſin? —— Be ſenſible of the danger of this ſin; it brings imminent and unavoidable deſtruction along with it. Tremble at that Scripture, *John 3. 18. He that believeth not*

is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God; he is condemned; a sentence of death is past upon thee, if thou be in a state of unbelief.

Secondly, My other word of Counsel is this, Oh labour, labour to get this cursed sin of unbelief destroyed in you: O let this sin be destroyed, or else thou must be destroyed: But you will say, *How shall we get this sin of unbelief cured?* I will tell you; will you hearken to me in four or five Rules? and then I have done.

First, Take heed of Atheism; for I professe we are fallen into dayes of Atheism, & all our Religion (if the Lord be not merciful to us) will end in Atheism. Infidelism and Atheism, there is but one step between them; what is Atheism, but when men will not believe there is a God? all Infidelity springs from Atheism. But you will say, *What, do you think we are Atheists? Do you think that we believe there is not a God?* Let me tell you, There are Atheists in Opinion, as well as Atheists in Language, *The Fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*; there are Atheists in practice, as well as Atheists in profession, *They professe that they know God, but in works they deny him.* Take heed therefore of this cursed sin of Atheism.

Secondly, Would you have unbelief removed, then learn to know more of God, to know more of his Goodnesse, Wisdome, Holinesse, Purity, Perfection, and other of his glorious Attributes: *They that know thy Name, will put their trust in thee.* I am sure, did you but know him, you would believe in him, you would obey him, you would

fear

fear before him. *I know whom I have believed,* saith St. *Paul,* 2 Tim. 1. 12.

Thirdly, Resolve to practice what you do know. If you would be Believers, you must know that there are many things a man may believe notionally, which he does not believe practically: I shall give you an instance. There is never a one of you that hears me this day, but believes you are mortal, you believe you shall dye, you verily believe that, as you believe there is a Sun in the Firmament; yet notwithstanding though you do believe this, yet many of you can live as securely, as merrily, and madly, as if so be you should never drop down into the dust; here now indeed is a notional Faith, but here is not a practical Faith; it is one thing to believe a truth notionally, and another thing to believe it practically.

Fourthly, Would you have unbelief removed, then Oh beg, and beg earnestly that God would take away your hearts of stone, and give you hearts of flesh; let this be your Prayer every day. Do you not remember how I opened that Text to you, *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh,* Ezek. 36. 26. What is a stony heart, but a senseless heart; a heart senseless of sin, and a heart fearless of wrath? Now, do but observe, that unbelief and hardness of heart, they still go together. In *Mark* 16. 14. *Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven, as they sate at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart.* Our Saviour upbraids them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Why are you so backward

to believe? it is becauſe of the hardneſſe of your hearts.

Fifthly, I beſeech you to meditate often of the danger of unbelief; meditate often what will be the woful Effects and Iſſues of your unbelief; conſider the Threatnings, the Precepts, and the Promiſes of the Almighty. In *John* 8. 24. *I ſaid therefore unto you, that you ſhall dye in your ſins; for if you believe not that I am he, you ſhall dye in your ſins.* What dye in ſin! Oh what greater curſe can poſſibly be uttered! To dye in ſin, to rot in ſin, to come out of your Graves in ſin, to be preſented before your Judge in your ſins! *John* 3. *ult. He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life, and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* The wrath of God abideth on him: If it were only for a few dayes, it might be born; but it will be abiding, and abiding, and abiding to all eternity; the wrath of God will abide upon that Soul that does not believe. In one word, and ſo I have done: As God ſpeaks to the Prophet in another caſe, *They will not ſee, but they ſhall ſee*: I apply it thus, You that will not believe, I promiſe you, you ſhall believe; you that will not believe ſavingly, you ſhall believe deſparingly; you that will not believe that God is ſo juſt, ſo ſtrict, ſo ſevere, you ſhall believe when you feel the wrath of the Almighty ſeizing upon you, never to be removed; you that will not believe now to the ſaving of your Souls, you ſhall believe as the Devils, to believe and tremble; you then will believe the torments of Hell in that day, when you feel them in that

place

place where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth: It is better to believe these things now, than believe them when you feel them. The Lord work these things upon our hearts, that this Soul-destroying sin may not be our ruine.

CHRISTS Precioufneſſe.

1 Pet. 2. 7.

Vnto you therefore which believe, he is precious; but unto them which are diſobedient, the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the Head of the Corner.

THe holy Apoſtle, that he might the better draw Chriſtians to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, to love him, embrace him, and obey him as the Captain of their Salvation, in the beginning of this Chapter commends to them both the Word of Chriſt, and Chriſt himſelf, who is the Kirnel and Subſtance of the Word; he commends the Word of Chriſt to them, in the firſt and ſecond verſes of this Chapter, *Wherefore laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and evil ſpeakings, as new born Babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the Word, that*

that ye may grow thereby. And he commends Jesus Christ himself to them, two wayes.

First, By shewing what he is in himself.

Secondly, By shewing what benefits Believers shall have by him.

First, He shews what the Lord Jesus Christ is in himself; in *vers.* 4. *To whom coming as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.* He is a living stone, a stone that hath life in himself, and a stone that gives life unto others, *For he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life,* 1 John 5. 12. —— And not only a *living stone*, but he is *chosen of God*, and very *precious*; the Pearl of the Gospel, that precious only excellent one, in comparison of whom, all the Kingdoms of the world are but as a heap of dung: —— But then, as the Apostle commends him for what he is in himself, so he commends Jesus Christ, by what he hath done for all those that believe in him, in the 5. *verse, Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual House, an holy Priest-hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* This invaluable benefit you shall have by him, you shall not only be justified by him, but you shall be sanctified, you shall be made a holy Priest-hood, and all your services shall be made acceptable through him. To confirm this weighty Truth, the Apostle produces a Testimony out of the Prophet *Isaiah, Isa.* 28. 16. *Therefore saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Sion for a Foundation, a stone, a tryed stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth, shall not make haste.* Having thus confirmed this Doctrine, he makes Application of it in this

verse; and this Application is by way of Comfort to Believers, and discomfort to those that believe not. —— First, It is a Doctrine that affords a great deal of comfort to Believers; *For*, sayes he, *to you that believe, Jesus Christ is precious*: But it administers a great deal of discomfort to Unbelievers, *To them that are disobedient*, to them that hearken not to the voyce of Christ; for sayes the Apostle, Though this Christ be despised by them, yet he shall be infinitely advanced, he is become the Head, the Corner stone, and they, notwithstanding their despising of him, shall be everlastingly ruined, for he will be to them a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient. This is the Connexion, or Context of these words with the former. It is the first Branch of the Text here that I principally aim at, in these words, *To you therefore that believe, he is precious*. The words (therefore) hath reference unto the fore-going verse, wherein the Apostle tells us, that the Lord Jesus Christ is such a Foundation stone, such a Corner stone, such a rock of Salvation, that whosoever *believes in him, shall not be confounded*, shall not be condemned; *For there is no condemnation to them that have a part and interest in him*, Rom. 8. 1. Therefore saith the Apostle, *Certainly to you he must needs be very precious*. As if he should say, You have an infinite, and invaluable benefit by him, therefore you have great reason so highly to prize him; *Unto you that do believe*, that is, that can rest and rely upon this Rock of Salvation, that can pawn your Souls upon him, that can close with him, and cleave to him, and obey him as your Prince.

Prince and your Saviour, *Unto you*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *he is precious*, or he is a price and an honour; for ſo the Original word τιμὴ ſignifies; he is not only precious, but of infinite price; he is not only honourable, but honour it ſelf in the Abſtract, for the word τιμὴ ſignifies both price and honour. The words being thus opened, afford theſe two Points of Doctrine, which lye clear in the Text.

Doct. 1. *That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is infinitely precious in himſelf.*

Doct. 2. *As Jeſus Chriſt is precious in himſelf, ſo is he exceeding precious in the eyes of all Believers, and moſt highly prized by them.*

Doct. 1. *That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is infinitely precious in himſelf.*

He is called in the 4th verſe of this Chapter, *A living ſtone, choſen of God, and precious.* And in *Iſa.* 28. 16. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Sion for a Foundation, a ſtone, a tryed ſtone, a precious Corner ſtone, a ſure Foundation.* For the better underſtanding of this Point, two things are to be opened.

Firſt, What it is to be precious, or what may be included in this Phraſe, *precious.*

Secondly, How this may be applyed to Jeſus Chriſt, or wherein the preciouſneſſe of Jeſus Chriſt conſiſts.

Firſt, What is it to be precious? What is included in this Phraſe *precious?* The Hebrew word יקר

יקר signifies divers things; I will name you but theſe five or ſix, and every one of thoſe ſignifications, are rightly applicable to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Sometimes the word *precious* is taken for bright and glorious. Thus the Sun and the Moon, are ſaid to walk in brightneſſe, *Job* 31. 26. *If I beheld the Sun when it ſhined, or the Moon walking in brightneſſe.* *Job* there ſpeaking of the Moon, ſayes it *walks in brightneſſe*, it walks as it were through the Heavens honourably, it walks in a great deal of brightneſſe and glory. Thus the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in this ſenſe is precious, becauſe he is the glorious *Sun of Righteouſneſſe*, as he is called *Mal.* 4. 2. *Unto you that fear my Name, ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſſe ariſe with healing under his wings.* And he calls himſelf *the bright Morning-Star*, in *Rev.* 22. 16. *I am the bright Morning-Star.* Again

Secondly, The word *precious*, is taken ſometimes for that that is ſcarce and rare to be had, for that which is not beſtowed upon all, but upon ſome few perſons. Thus the Word of God in *Samuels* time, was ſaid to be *precious*, 1 Sam. 3. 1. *And the Word of the Lord was precious in thoſe dayes*; there was no open viſion, it was communicated but to a few. And in this ſenſe alſo the Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be ſaid to be *precious*, becauſe he is communicated but to a very few, *A little Flock*, Luke 12. 32. *A little little Flock*, as the word ſignifies, a very little Flock in compariſon of thoſe that have no intereſt in him, nor any benefit by him, *For not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called*, 1 Cor. 1. 26. There are but few, very few in compariſon of the

the great multitude that have an intereſt in him; in that regard he is precious.

Thirdly, Sometimes the word *precious* is taken for that which is dear and coſtly. So the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is very dear to his Father, the dearly beloved Son of his boſome, and his blood is very coſtly, it is called *precious blood*. If the blood of all the Princes upon Earth had been ſpilt, nay, if all the Angels in Heaven had loſt their lives, it had not been comparable to one drop of the precious blood of Jeſus Chriſt, which is called *the blood of God*, Acts 20. 28. *Take heed therefore unto your ſelves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Over-ſeers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.*

Fourthly, The word *precious* ſometimes is taken for that which is pleaſant and delightful, *Jer.* 31. 20. *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleaſant Child?* There is the ſame word for *precious*, called *pleaſant*. In this regard the Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be called *precious*, becauſe he is ſo delightful to the Father, *Iſa.* 42. 1. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth.*

Fifthly, That may be ſaid to be *precious*, that is of very great and invaluable uſe, or that whereof we have an indiſpenſable neceſſity. Now in this ſenſe alſo Jeſus Chriſt is precious, he is of infinite uſe to a Believer; ſuch indiſpenſible need have we of him, that without him we muſt periſh everlaſtingly; *Except ye eat of the fleſh of Chriſt, and drink his blood, you have no life in you*, John 6. 53.

Laſtly, That is ſaid to be *precious*, which is honourable; *Since thou waſt precious in my ſight, thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved thee*; there-

fore

fore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life, Isa. 43. 4. And as I told you even now, the Original word יקר signifieth honour, as well as price. So the Lord Jesus Christ he is infinitely honourable, honourable in himself, all the Angels honour and admire him, and he is an honour to his Church and Chosen, to all those that have a part and interest in him; therefore he is said to be *The glory of his people Israel,* Luke 2. 32. *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* You see the first thing opened, What it is to be precious.

Now the second thing for Explication is this, How this Title *precious* may be applyed to Jesus Christ? or wherein does the preciousnesse of Jesus Christ so much appear?— For answer to this, You must know the preciousnesse of Jesus Christ, does appear in these six particulars.

First, He is exceeding, infinitely, unconceiveably precious in his Person, God and Man united in one Person, Co-Essential with the Father, that is, having the same Essence and Substance with him; in *John* 10. 30. *I and my Father are one.* And he is Co-Equal with the Father, *He thought it no robery to be equal with God,* Phil. 2. 6. *Being the brightnesse of his Fathers Glory, and the expres Image of his Person,* Heb. 1. 3. Therefore he is infinitely precious in his Person.

Secondly, As he is precious in his Person, so is he precious in his Titles, those rich and glorious Titles that are attributed to him. For example, *Isa. 9. 6. This is the name wherewith the Lord Jesus Christ is called, Wonderful, Counsellour,* El, *the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of*

of Peace. Pray mark with what a glorious Title he is called there, *The Mighty God*; how dare then any blasphemous *Arrian*, or *Atheist*, deny the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, deny that he is God, when this is one of the Titles wherewith he is called, *The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace?* What glorious Titles are here? So you shall read he is called his Fathers delight, *Isa.* 42. 1. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth.*——And the Fathers bosome-friend, *John* 1. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time, save the only begotten Son, which is in the bosome of the Father; he hath declared him.* If the love of all the Parents in the world were concentered in one, it were but as a drop of that infinite Ocean of love, that is between the Father and the Son.—Nay more, he is called the Fathers Fellow, *Zech.* 13. 7. *Awake O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.* So likewise he is called, *The Head of the Church*, Eph. 5. 23. and *the Judge both of quick and dead*, Acts 10. 42. In a word, such is the Dignity of his Person, such is the Excellency of his Merits, such is the Sweetnesse of his Graces, such is the Fulnesse of his Perfection, that the Scripture does abundantly put those terms of honour upon the Lord Christ, as sometimes comparing him to *A Corner Stone*, because he does support us, *Eph.* 2. 20. Sometimes to *A Vine*, because he does refresh us, *John* 15. 1. Sometimes unto a *Physitian*, because he does heal us, *Matth.* 9. 12. Sometimes to *A Day Star*, because he does enlighten us, *Rev.* 22. 16. Sometimes to *A Shepherd*, because

cause he does lead us, *John* 10. Sometimes to *Manna*, or *the Bread of life*, because he does feed us: What glorious Titles are these that are given to Christ? therefore he is precious in his Titles.

Thirdly, As he is precious in his Titles, so he is precious in his Offices; in his Kingly Office, in his Priestly Office, and in his Prophetical Office.

First, He is precious in his Kingly Office, he calls himself *The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19. 16. *The King of Kings*: He is such a King that conquers all the enemies of our Salvation, as Sin, and Satan, and Death, and Hell, and the World; other Kings Rule over us, but this King can only Rule in us, *My Kingdome is not of this world*, saith he? *The Kingdome of God is within you*, Luke 17. 21. This King can make Laws that can bind the Conscience; he is such a King as hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him, *Math.* 28. 18.

Again, He is such a Priest as hath *reconciled us to God the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for us, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Col. 1. 21. Heb. 7. 25. Heb. 4. 15. And he is such a Prophet, as can perfectly instruct his Church; others may preach to the ear, but he hath his Pulpit in Heaven only, that can preach to the heart; other Preachers can open the Scriptures, but it is Jesus Christ only that can open our understandings, that we may understand the Scriptures, *Luke* 24. 45. *Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.* O what glorious Offices are these!

Fourthly, He is precious in his Ordinances: For example, His Word is exceeding precious to

all

all thoſe that have taſted the ſweetneſſe of it; how precious was it to *David*, Pſal. 119. 72. *The Law of thy Mouth is better unto me than thouſands of Gold and Silver.* How precious are Sabbaths to thoſe that know how much of Heaven is wrapt up in the Sabbath! Certainly, theſe Sabbath dayes are Market-dayes for our Souls, wherein we may make proviſion for Eternity; dayes wherein the Lord Jeſus Chriſt many times communicates himſelf, and much of his ſweetneſſe to thoſe that wait upon him in holy duties. And how precious is the Ordinance of the Lords Supper! wherein the Lord Chriſt makes us *a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of Wines on the Lees, of fat things, full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined*, Iſa. 25. Wherein he gives his own fleſh to eat, his fleſh that was crucified to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and his own blood to drink, that blood which only can quench the fire of Hell, quench the fire of Gods anger, which otherwiſe would have been burning, and burning againſt us to all eternity.

Fifthly, As he is precious in his Ordinances, ſo he is precious in his Prerogatives; for he, and he only, is the Saviour of the world, and beſides him there was no other Saviour, *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved*: That is, there is nothing can be named, for it is but a Hebraiſme, there is nothing can be named under Heaven whereby we can be ſaved, but only the Name of Jeſus Chriſt; he had no Coadjutour, or Helper, in the work of our Redemption, Iſa. 63. 3. *I have trodden the Wine-preſſe alone, and of the People there was none with me; for I will tread*

tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. And as he is the only Saviour, so he is the only Mediator too, *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 2.5. So he is the only Head of his Church, *Eph.* 1. 22. *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church.* He only hath the Supremacy and Authority, as being Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, one that is able to protect his people from all injuries, one that is able to prevent all the plots and projects that are hatcht, and invented against them; he hath these Prerogatives that cannot be given to any Creature in Heaven or Earth, but only unto him; therefore he is precious in his Prerogatives.

Sixthly, The Lord Christ is precious also in the purchase of his blood: the purchase he made for us by his blood, is a very precious purchase; and the portion that he bestows on his Elect, that he hath purchased for them, is a precious portion; so he is precious, not only in regard of his Person, but in regard of his Portion; for example, the redemption that he hath wrought for us by his blood, is a precious Redemption, a Redemption from Sin, and Satan, and Death, and Hell; *In whom we have Redemption, through his blood, the forgivenesse of sins*, Ephes. 1. 7.

Secondly, The donation or bestowing of his Spirit, it is a very precious gift, that the Spirit of God should in his Name, that is for his merit, be bestowed upon all those that do believe: *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father*

Father will ſend in my Name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you, John 14. 26. O what a precious, invaluable gift is it, to have the Spirit of God given us, to quicken us, to draw us to Jeſus Chriſt, and to carry on the work of Grace in us!

Thirdly, The Graces of the Spirit, which likewiſe are purchaſed by him, are precious Graces. Faith is a precious Grace, as it is called 2 *Pet.* 1. 2. *Simon Peter, a Servant, and an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to them that have obtained like precious Faith with us, through the righteouſneſſe of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; that the tryal of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth.* The tryal of Gold is the worſt thing belongs to Gold, and the tryal of Faith is the worſt thing that belongs to Faith; yet ſaith the Apoſtle, *The tryal of your Faith is much more precious than that of Gold,* 1 Pet. 1. 7. So Repentance, that is a precious Grace, becauſe it is *Repentance unto life,* as the Apoſtle calls it, *Acts* 11. 18. *When they heard theſe things, they held their peace, and glorified God, ſaying, Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto life.* —— And Hope, that is a ſtedfaſt Grace, it is the Anchor of the Soul. And Love, that is a lovely Grace, it brings the Soul into neerer Communion with God. —— Then Wiſdome, that is a precious Grace, a ſhining Grace: *A mans wiſdome maketh his face to ſhine,* ſaith *Solomon,* Eccleſ. 8. 1. And *Job* ſpeaking of Wiſdome, ſaith he, *Job* 28. 12, 13. *But where ſhall Wiſdome be found, and where is the place of Underſtanding? Man knoweth not the price there-*

of, neither is it found in the Land of the Living; it is of more price than Rubies, it is of an invaluable price. And Humility, that is an honourable Grace. And Fear, that is a preserving Grace. And Patience, that is a supporting Grace. And Perseverance, that is a Crowning Grace. All these Graces are precious Graces, and they are all of them bestowed upon us, meerly upon the account of Christs merits.

Fourthly, The Priviledges that we have by Jesus Christ, they are precious Priviledges, Union with him, and Communion in his Life and Death, and Resurrection, and Comforts, accesse to God the Father, and that with boldnesse.

Fifthly, The Promises that are sealed by his blood, they are precious Promises; promises for this life, and promises for the life to come; that Promise, that *all things shall work together for good to them that love God*; a big-bellyed promise, as I may so say, *All things work together for good*, and our prayers and our persons shall be accepted.

Lastly, The Inheritance that he hath purchased for us, is a precious Inheritance, *An incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven.* In brief, such is the preciousnesse of the Lord Jesus Christ, that compare him with the most precious things that can be named, and you shall see they are but vile and base in comparison of him: for example, 1. The Souls of men and women, they are said to be precious; but oh how infinitely precious is Jesus Christ, whose blood is a valuable and equivalent price for the Souls of all the men and women in the world. —— 2. Light is said to be precious; Christ said of himself, *I*

am

am the light of the world, John 8. 12. Light is precious to those that are in a Dungeon of darknesse; now sayes Jesus Christ, *I am the light of the world*. —3. Truth is precious, so precious that we are to buy it at any rate, and sell it at no rate; Jesus Christ sayes of himself, *I am the Truth*, John 14. 6. ——4. Fountains and Springs of water are precious in hot and dry Countreys; Oh the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the Well of Salvation, *Isa.* 12. 3. *Therefore with Joy shall ye draw water out of the Wells of Salvation.* ——5. Bread is precious to those that are ready to perish; a man will venture the getting of bread, with the hazard of his life, *Lam.* 5. 9. *We gat our bread with the peril of our lives*. Now Jesus Christ is the *Bread of Life*, John 6. 48. —— 6. Balm and Balsome is precious. His blood is the only Balm that can cure wounded Souls; so precious is the Lord Jesus Christ, that all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, are but a picture of that beauty and preciousnesse that is in him; he is the Abstract and Epitome of all perfections; how precious must he needs be, to whom all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, do contribute all their Excellencies, to make him excellent and glorious! Thus you see the Point opened. Now for the Uses of it.

First, By way of *Information*. Is the Lord Jesus Christ so infinitely precious, you may see then, why the Souls of men and women are so precious, because they are purchased by a precious Saviour, purchased by his precious blood. Hearken O sons of men! why are you tumbling up and down in dirt and clay? why do you not raise your hearts

and thoughts higher and higher, seeing that you have such precious Souls, that are capable of a precious Inheritance? why do you not look after a precious Covenant of Grace, sealed to you, and precious Promises confirmed to you by the blood of Christ? why do you not look after that precious Pearl, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is worth more than ten thousand worlds? O the baseneſſe of the heart of man, that ſhould prefer dirt, and droſs, and dung, before him who is ſo infinitely precious, that they ſhould ſo undervalue their precious Souls, that coſt ſuch an invaluable rate for their Redemption.

Secondly, By way of *Information*; ſee the horrible greatneſſe of the ſin of unbelief, that makes the ſinner undervalue this precious Redeemer. Sayes Jeſus Chriſt, *You will not come to me, that you might have life*, John 5. 40 O bewail your unbelief, that keeps Chriſt and your Souls, a precious Chriſt, and your poor Souls, at ſuch a diſtance.

Thirdly, By way of *Information*; take notice what a bleſſed condition they are in, that have gotten the Lord Jeſus Chriſt into their Souls! If the Lord beſtows this gift of all gifts, this precious Chriſt upon you, Oh it is more than if he had given thee the world; nay, then if he had given thee ten thouſand worlds for thy portion; O rejoyce in thy portion; for as ſoon as ever thou art a Believer, thy heart is made a Cabinet for this precious Pearl, the Lord Chriſt, for *He dwels in our hearts by faith*, Eph. 3. 17. O manifeſt to the world, the brightneſſe of this Pearl, let ſome luſtre of Jeſus Chriſt ſhine in thy Converſation, ſhine through

through this Cabinet, as light shines through a Lanthorn.

The second Use is by way of *Exhortation*: And here I must but name some few particulars, answerable to the Explication of the Doctrine I insisted on more largely; and there are several Duties I would briefly commend to you, and the Lord give you hearts, and me a heart, and every one a heart to close with this precious Truth tendered to you, in reference to this precious Redeemer.

First, If Jesus Christ be so precious in his person, as being God and Man, then learn to honour him, admire and adore him; for *This is the will of God the Father, that all should honour Jesus Christ, even as they honour the Father.* See it expressely commanded, in *John* 5. 23. *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father: He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.* Why should they honour the Son, as they honour the Father? because he is so precious in his person, being God and Man united together in one person; therefore see that you honour him, therefore kisse the Son with a kisse of Reverence, of Love, and of Obedience, lest his anger be kindled against you.

Secondly, Is the Lord Jesus Christ so precious in his Titles, as being the Delight of the Father, the Fathers Fellow, the Judge of the world, the Judge of quick and dead; O then, never give rest to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, never rest satisfied with any condition, with any portion, with any parts, priviledges, whatsoever here below;

till you have got an interest in him, that is every way so precious; get him and get all, want him and want all. A man that catches at the shadow, you know loses the substance; but get the substance, and you get the shadow with it. So long as you look after other things besides Christ, you lose him; but if you get him, you get the shadow of all, you get life, and peace, and comfort, and all that your hearts can desire; be content to lose all to get him, who when you have got, you shall be sure never to lose.

Thirdly, Is Jesus Christ so precious in his Offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet? then do you labour to be experimentally partakers of all those Offices, that you also may be Kings: *And hath made us to be Kings and Priests to God and his Father*, Rev. 1. 6. Labour to be Kings, in Ruling over your own lusts, over your own distempers, and passions; as he said excellently, *Do but conquer thy self, and the world is conquered to thy hand.* A greater victory it is, for a man to conquer himself, than to conquer a Kingdome. Labour in this sense to be Kings, that your iniquities may not have dominion over you, but that you may at length get victory over those lusts, which fight against your Souls. Again, labour to be spiritual Priests, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices to God, acceptable through Jesus Christ; and do you labour to be Prophets, that is, endued with such wisdom, and spiritual knowledge, that you may be able to admonish, and instruct one another. This is that which the Apostle speaks of, to the great commendation of the *Romans*, in *Rom.* 15. 14. *And I my self also, am perswaded of you my Brethren, that*

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ye also are full of goodnesse, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Do you my Brethren, labour to be like to Jesus Christ, in all his Offices.

Fourthly, Is Jesus Christ so precious in his Ordinances? O then, do you labour to taste the sweetnesse of every Ordinance; taste the sweetnesse of the Word of God, that you may say, *How sweet is thy Word to my taste! yea, sweeter than Honey to my mouth,* Psal. 119. 103. Taste the sweetnesse of Jesus Christ in the precious Ordinance of the Lords Supper, that you may say, *I sate down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste,* Cant. 2. 3. And in *Cant.* 5. *ult. His mouth is most sweet, His mouth is sweetnesses,* as the Hebrew phrase carries it, and *he is altogether lovely*: He is most sweet in his Ordinances; O say, one hours Communion with him, is better than all the pleasures of the world; one taste of that spiced Wine, and of the juice of the Pomegranate, spoken of in *Cant.* 8. 2. *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mothers house, who would instruct me; I would cause thee to drink of spiced Wine, of the juice of my Pomegranate.* One draught of that generous Wine, that spiced Wine, how pleasant and delightful would it be to my Soul! Is Jesus Christ so sweet in his Ordinances, O then labour to taste the sweetnesse of Jesus Christ in his Ordinances.

Fifthly, Is Jesus Christ so precious in his Prerogatives, is he the only Saviour, the only Mediator, then subject your selves to him, and to none but him, be subject to him as your only Prince and Saviour; and say, *O Lord our God, other Lords*

besides thee have had Dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy Name, Isa. 26. 13.

Lastly, Is the Lord Jesus Christ so exceeding precious in the purchase of his blood? then do you labour to have an interest in his purchase; what is it for you to hear of the purchase of Christs blood, if this purchase be not yours, if you have not a share and part in it? what is Christ, if he be not my Christ? what is his purchase, it it be not my purchase? For example, if he hath purchased an Eternal Redemption by his own blood, O do you labour every day to get an assurance that you are in the number of his Redeemed ones.

But how may we know that?

I answer, If you be the Redeemed of Jesus Christ, then you will walk in the way of the Redeemed of Christ, and that way is called *holy*, *Isa.* 35. 8. *And an high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holinesse, the unclean shall not passe over it, but it shall be for those: the way faring men, though fools, shall not erre therein.* Hath he purchased, not only Redemption, but the Donation of his Spirit? O do you beg the Spirit of God, that, that Gift, that great Gift, may be bestowed on you, according to that Promise (a Text I opened to you in many Sermons) *And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgements, and do them*, Ezek. 36. 27. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. And do you put the Lord in mind of all those gracious Promises that he hath made. *I will poure water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground,*

ground, I will poure my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my blessing upon thine Off-spring, Isa. 44. 3.

Again, Hath he purchased such precious Graces to be bestowed upon all his Children, upon all those that have an interest in him? O then do you labour to be truly gracious, not only to have restraining grace, but renewing grace; not only common grace, but sanctifying grace, sound faith, sincere love, unfeigned obedience, that you may have the graces of humility, meeknesse, patience, that you may have the Image of Jesus Christ stamped upon your Souls, that you may receive of his fulnesse grace for grace, that you may in every grace of Christ have a part, that by his wisdom you may be made wise, by his holinesse, we may be made holy.

Again, Hath he purchased likewise such precious Priviledges for his Children? O then do you labour to be made partakers of those precious priviledges, to be united to Christ, and to have Communion with him, in his life, and because he lives, you may live also, I mean the life of Grace, and life more abundantly; and communion in his Death, because he dyed for sin, you may dye to sin; and communion in his Resurrection, because he rose from the Grave, you may rise to holinesse and newnesse of life. And the like.

Again, Hath he purchased such precious Promises, and all those Promises are sealed in his blood, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. *For all the promises of God are in him, Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.* O then do you labour to be made partakers of those Promises, that you may know that you are Heirs of those Promises, that you may look upon them as

Legacies,

Legacies, bequeathed to you by your dear Lord and Master, by your dear Husband Jesus Christ, who left these Legacies to you.

Lastly, Hath he purchased a precious Inheritance, that is incorruptible and undefiled? then I beseech you in the fear of Almighty God, that you take heed that it fares not with you, as it did with that unbelieving Prince, that saw the plenty in *Samaria*, but did not tast of it, but dyed for all that; so you to hear of a glorious Inheritance, but to come short of it, & so be undone to all Eternity, according to my Afternoon Text, *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*, Heb. 4. 1. O hath he purchased this Inheritance? and do not you long to be with him, where you shall sin no more, nor sorrow no more? Thus you see what use may be made of the preciousnesse of Jesus Christ in all these respects, as he is precious in his Person, in his Titles, in his Offices, in his Kingly, Priestly, and Prophetical Offices, in his Ordinances, in his Prerogatives, in the Purchases of his blood, those precious Priviledges, and Inheritance, he hath purchased for us. The Lord help us seriously to think on these things, and to meditate upon them, and to lay them up in our hearts, as Cordials against a day wherein we may stand in need of them. And so I have done with the first Point of Doctrine, *That Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself*. The other Doctrine is, *That the Lord Jesus Christ is exceeding precious to all Believers, and is highly prized by them.*

1 Pet. 2. 7.

Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.——

MAde entrance into this Text the last time that we had this solemn occasion of drawing neer to God, in the use of this precious Ordinance of the Lords Supper; I shewed you the Coherence, Sense, and Scope of the words, and there were two Points of Doctrine that I drew from them: The first was this,

That Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself.

I now come to the second Doctrine drawn from these words, and that is this,

As Jesus Christ is precious in himself, so is he exceeding precious to all Believers, and highly prized by them.

For the proof, or setling of this Point, before I come to open it to you, I shall give you but two Testimonies for the Confirmation of it; the one out of the Old Testament, the other out of the New; that out of the Old Testament, is in *Cant.* 5. 9, 10. where you shall read, the strangers enquiring of the Spouse, that is the Church of Christ, saying, *What*

is

is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou dost so charge us? The Church makes this answer, *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand*, &c. My Beloved is white and ruddy; Jesus Christ he is white in respect of his Divine Nature, *Being the brightnesse of his Fathers Glory, and the expresse Image of his Person*, Heb. 1. 3. And yet he is red in his Humane Nature, being of the same substance with the first *Adam*, that was made of red Earth; he was white in his holinesse, but yet he is red also in that bloody passion, which he was contented to undertake for our sakes; he was white in his unspotted innocency, but yet he is red withall by the imputation of our sins, which are said to be Crimson and Scarlet sins, *Isa.* 1. 18. *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.* Thus Jesus Christ is white and ruddy: I but sayes the Church withall, *He is the chiefest among ten thousand*; or he is the Standard-Bearer among ten thousand, as the Hebrew word may be interpreted, the Standard Bearer; he is higher than the Kings of the Earth, therefore called the *Standard-Bearer*, Psal. 89. 27. *Also, I will make my first-born higher than the Kings of the Earth.* He guides and leads his people, as being the Captain of their Salvation, he leads them as a Standard-Bearer leads an Army, by his Colours. O what a high price and value did the Church set upon Jesus Christ here, *He is white and ruddy, the choicest among ten thousand*; Christ was very precious

ous you see in her eyes. The other testimony which I shall give you, is in the new Testament, *Phil.* 3.8. *Yea doubtlesse, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.* I count all things but loss; whatever I esteemed gain before, all my outward Priviledges, that I stood upon before, I count them but as loss; but that is not all, *I count all things*, sayes he, *dung, dross and dung*, or as the Greek Phrase there signifies, σκύβαλα, such things as we cast but to Dogs; I account them but as scrapings, as skins, as parings, as nothing worth, in comparison of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there had been presented to *Paul*, a whole Mountain of Gold and Silver, and precious pearls, in comparison of Jesus Christ, it would have been but as a heap of dung to him; *I count all things* (sayes he) *but loss, and dung, in comparison of Christ.* Consider but what things they were, that he did undervalue, in comparison of Christ, and consider who did undervalue them. Consider what it was that *Paul* did undervalue; all the Priviledges that he had; for example, He tells you in the 5. and 6. verses, *Circumcised the eighth day* (so outwardly in Covenant with God, bearing the Covenant of God in his flesh; this was nothing in his esteem) *of the Stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews.* Of the Stock of *Abraham*; this was his Birth-Priviledge, but this was nothing: He was a man of Parts and Learning, brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*; but all his natural parts, abilities and endowments, all these he esteemed nothing

nothing: yea, he was a man of a civil and unblamable conversation, *touching the righteousnes which is in the Law, blameles*. As to his outward man, he was blameles, none could say that black was his eye: yet all these Priviledges he esteemed loss and dung, in comparison of Jesus Christ. —— And then consider, who it was that did undervalue them; it was *Paul*, a Scholar, a man of Parts, a man of no mean City, but of the City of *Tarsus*, in *Cilicia*, Acts 21. 39. It was *Paul*, that was not a Novice in Religion, that knew not what he said, but *Paul* the Aged, that was well experienced in such things, that knew very well what he said; it is he that passes this account of all things, in comparison of Jesus Christ; I, sayes he, esteem all these Priviledges, and if I had a thousand times as many more, I would esteem them but loss, and dross, and dung, as nothing, in comparison of Christ. Oh how invaluable was Jesus Christ to holy *Paul*, that was a believer! —

But for the better understanding of this Point, that we may see how excellent and precious Christ is to a believer, how highly he is prized by him;

First, It may be demanded, who are those Believers, to whom Christ is precious?

Secondly, Why is Christ so precious to them?

First, Who are those believers, to whom Christ is precious?

I answer, not they that have only an Hystorical Faith of Christ, to know that there was such a Saviour, that came into the world, and that he was God and Man, *and that he is able to save to the uttermost those that come to him*. Nor they that have

have only a temporary Faith, such a Faith as they had, which you read of in the Parable of the sower, *Math.* 13. *They that received the Seed into Stony places, the same are they which hear the Word, and anon with joy receive it; but they have no root, and for a while believe, but in time of temptation and persecution, they fall away,* Luke 8. 13. Not they, I say, that thus have only an hystorical Faith, or only a temporary Faith; but they are said to be believers, that are contented to take Jesus Christ upon his own tearms, to receive him as their King, and Priest, and Propher, they that can be content to close with him, and to cleave to him, as to the work of their salvation, and that can say with *Job, though thou kill me, I will put my trust in thee,* Job 13. 15. In a word, They are said to be believers, that can rest and relye upon Jesus Christ, that can cast their Souls into his Armes, to sink or swim with him, to live or dye with him, to be saved or damned with him: it is the true believer the Text here speaks of, when the Apostle sayes here, *to you that believe he is precious*; you must not understand it of a formal believer, neither must you understand it of a hypocritical believer; you must not understand it of those that have a false Faith, but of those that have a true Faith. I told you not long agoe, which some of you may remember, out of that Text, *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of Faith,* That there was a false and counterfeit Faith, as well as a true Faith; for example, I told you, — First, That that is an easie Faith, that is easily let into the Soul, without any work of conviction, contrition, and humiliation. That Faith that hath no tears, nor prayers, nor earnest endeavours,

vours, paid for the purchase of it, is cheap ware, and not worth a farthing. ——

Secondly, That Faith that is an idle, and an ineffectual Faith, that is never working upon the precepts of God, to obey them, nor on the promises of God, to embrace them, nor on the threatnings of God, to tremble at them. ——

Thirdly, That Faith that is an unthriving Faith, that never grows under the means of grace. True Faith is a growing Faith, 2 Thess. 1. 3. sayes the Apostle, *We are bound to thank God alwayes for you Brethren, as it is meet, because that your Faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other abounderh.* ——

Fourthly, That Faith that is a loose and licentious Faith, that Faith that hath room for Christ, and room for any reigning lust also, room for Christ, and room for the world, and the things of it; when a man can pretend love to Jesus Christ, and yet live in a known sin: whereas true Faith purifies the heart, *Acts* 15. 9. *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.* To them that have such a Faith, this false counterfeit Faith, this easie, idle, unthriving, loose and licentious Faith, to them Christ is not at all precious, they see no beauty at all in him. But they that have this true Faith, that is ushered in by conviction and humiliation, that is a growing Faith, an operative and working Faith, this holy Faith, as it is called in the 20. verse of the Epistle of St. *Jude*, *But ye Beloved, building up your selves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost*; to them that have this true Faith, to them Jesus Christ is precious, and they are the believers the Text here

speaks

ſpeaks of. So much of the firſt, who are thoſe believers, to whom Jeſus Chriſt is precious.

Secondly, why is Jeſus Chriſt ſo precious to ſuch believers? you ſee who they are, but why is he ſo precious to them, ſo highly prized by them? divers reaſons might be rendered; I ſhall give you theſe five or ſix.

Firſt, Jeſus Chriſt is ſo highly prized by believers, becauſe they ſee the indiſpenſable need that they have of him, that without him they are loſt, dead, damned, and undone for ever; therefore they prize him, becauſe they know they cannot live without him: They know that a condemned Priſoner hath not more need of a pardon; a poor beggar, that is ready to ſtarve in the ſtreets, hath not more need of food; nor a naked man, more need of cloaths; nor a ſick man, more need of a Phyſitian; than they have of Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore they prize him. They know they are fooliſh, yea folly it ſelf, therefore they have need of him to be their wiſdome, to guide them; they know they are guilty ſinners, therefore they know they have need of his righteouſneſs, to clear them; they know they are polluted and defiled ſinners, therefore they have need of his blood to purifie them; they know they are expoſed to the wrath of a ſin-revenging God, and the curſe of the condemning Law, and the condemnation of the ſecond Death, therefore they have need of him to be their redemption; They know that they are infinitely indebted, that they owe to God a debt of ten thouſand Talents, which they are never able to diſcharge, and therefore they have need of Chriſt to be their Surety; they know they are weak, and

ble to do nothing without him, (*without me*, sayes Christ, *ye can do nothing*) and they know Christ is their strength, as well as Redeemer, and that through Christ they can do all things, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheth me.* In a word, they know that Jesus Christ is their Rock, their Refuge, their Redeemer, their Peace, their Portion, their All, and therefore they see the infinite need they have of him, and that without him, they are nothing, they can do nothing, they are worse than nothing; therefore they prize him. Here is one Reason why Jesus Christ is so precious to true believers, because they see the infinite need they have of him.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is thus precious to true believers, because they see an invaluable and unconceivable beauty in him. It is true indeed, to unbelievers, Jesus Christ hath no beauty in him, that they should desire him, as it is *Isa.* 53. 2. *For he shall grow up before him, as a tender Plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form, nor comliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him.* A carnal earthly minded man, he sayes concerning Christ, as they did in the place before named, *Cant.* 5. 9. *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?* what is there of so much beauty in Christ, that we should either eye him, observe him, or prize him, or seek him, or look after him? *Acts* 4. 11. *This is the Stone, which was set at nought by you builders.* Jesus Christ is as a thing of nothing, in an unbelievers eye; such a one makes no more reckoning of him (with reverence be it spoken) than the dirt under foot: Whereas Faith, you must know, hath an Eagles

gles eye, it can see things afar off, it sees a great deal of beauty in the Lord Jesus Christ; though in respect of any of these outward accommodations, there is no beauty at all in him, yet discerning things with a spiritual eye, a believer sees Christ afar off, as it is said of *Abraham*, *John* 8. 56. *Your Father Abraham rejoyced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.* There was an eye of Faith in *Abraham*, *he saw my day, and rejoyced.* Hence it is, that believing in Christ, is sometimes expressed by this Phrase of seeing Christ, *Acts* 22. 14. *Ananias* speaking to *Paul* said, *The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and shouldst hear the voyce of his mouth.* See him, that is, that thou shouldst believe in him. Faith therefore sees Christ, sees him afar off, sees him, though cloathed with our flesh, with our infirmities. Faith looks upon Jesus Christ, and does see him evidently crucified, as the Apostle speaks, *Gal.* 3. 1. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the Truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you?* Nay, Faith sees a great deal of beauty in his sufferings, how much more in his Glory! for example, *Moses he esteemed the reproach of Christ, greater riches, than the treasures in Egypt*, Heb. 11. 26. why? *for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward*; he had the quick sighted eye of faith. You read in *Matth.* 2. when the wise men came from the East to *Hierusalem*, to enquire after him that was born King of the *Jewes*, that is, after Jesus Christ; when they came to enquire of him, they first came to *Hierusalem*, and they saw *Herod* (it may be) arrayed in all his

glorious Robes, but we do not read, that they fell down and worshipped *Herod*; then they came to *Bethlehem*, where they saw the Babe Jesus wrapt in swadling cloaths, in a poor Garb (it may be a little better than raggs) yet they fall down and worship him: Now, what is the reason that they did not worship a magnificent glorious *Herod*, in all his Robes, but they worship a poor contemptible Babe, in swadling cloaths? surely this was, because they had a spiritual eye of faith, they looked on Christ with an eye of faith, therefore in his infancy they saw greatness, in his meanness they saw Majesty, and more Glory in Christ in his Raggs, than in *Herod* in his Robes.

Thirdly, Christ is thus precious to true believers, because they do not only see the need they have of him, and a great deal of beauty in him, but they do receive very rich and invaluable benefits by him, for the present.

First, They receive many temporal mercies by him; all their temporal comforts come streaming to them in the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Heir of all things, and all things are believers by Christ, *All things are yours*, sayes the Apostle, *so far as you are Christs*, 1 Cor. 3. 22.

Secondly, As they receive temporal mercies, so they receive many spiritual Priviledges, Graces, and comforts by him: They receive spiritual Priviledges, as Justification, Sanctification, and Adoption.

First, Justification. Oh what a priviledge is this, that through Jesus Christ God should look upon believers, not as Sinners, but as Saints! for God to say of them, *Thou art all fair my Beloved, there*

is

is no spot in thee, in respect of Justification *there is no spot in thee*, though their Sanctification be imperfect, *Cant.* 4. 7. Believers have the blood of Jesus Christ to take away all their guilt, not only the guilt contracted in their unregenerate estate, but the guilt contracted in the estate of grace. Alas, sayes a Believer, when I have done a duty, used a comfort, filled my relations, in the best manner I can, what would become of me, if I had not a Saviour, a Mediator, to take away the iniquity of my holy Offerings? But now, this is a priviledge better worth than the Gold of *Ophir*, nay, better worth than the whole world; namely, by Jesus Christ, and believing in him, *We are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, Acts 13. 39.

Secondly, And as they receive the priviledge of Justification, so Believers receive the priviledge of Sanctification by him; for Christ is not only made to us Wisdome by his Word, and Righteousnesse by his Merit, but Sanctification also by his Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. Christ is made not only a pattern of holiness to us, but the principle of holiness; Believers are strong in his Strength, and wise by his Wisdome, and holy by his Holiness, and meek by his Meekness; they have the Image of Jesus Christ stampt upon their Souls, they know him in some measure, in the power of his death, killing and crucifying the old man, together with the affections and lusts thereof; they know him in the power of his Resurrection, raising them up to a holy and Heavenly Conversation. Thus I say they receive the priviledge of Sanctification by Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, And then they receive the Priviledge of Adoption too; as he is the Natural Son of God, Believers being united to him, they are partakers of his Son-ship, they are made the Sons and Daughters of God by Adoption: *And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*, 2 Cor. 6. *ult.*

Secondly, And so Believers receive spiritual grace from him. Look as the Oyl that was poured upon *Aarons* head, run down to the skirts of his cloathing; so from that fulnesse of Grace which is in Jesus Christ, Believers receive, and grace for grace, a continual supply of grace from him, he is the Author of all their graces, he is the Author of their Faith, he is called *The Author and Finisher of their Faith*, Heb. 12, 2. He is the Author of their Love; Christ first warms their hearts with a sense of his Love, before they can love him: *We love him, because he first loved us*, 1 John 4. 19. He is the Author of their Repentance; *God hath exalted him to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to his people*, Acts 5. 31.

Thirdly, And then they receive spiritual comforts by him too. *My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be affraid*, John 14. 27. He gives Believers that peace, that the world can neither give, nor take away from them; that peace and comfort, that can hold up their heads in all outward storms; *In the world* (saies he) *you shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have peace*, John 16. *ult.* At the same time, when they have tribulation in the world, they may have peace in Christ; at the same time, when

there

there is rattling upon the Tiles, there may be musick in the Chamber; outward tribulations, and inward consolations, they may stand together at the very same time: *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul*, Psal. 94. 19. So, though there may be multitude of troubles within, yet there may be comforts to refresh the Soul. This is the Third Reason, why Jesus Christ is so precious to Believers, Because they have much in hand from Christ, they have Temporal Mercies, and Spiritual Mercies, Spiritual Priviledges, Justification, Sanctification, and Adoption; and Spiritual Graces, and Spiritual Comforts.

Reas. 4. Jesus Christ is very precious to Believers, Because they expect much from him. As they have much in hand by him, so they have more in hope from him; they have much for the present, but more for the future; for, what do they expect from him but an Inheritance incorrupted, undefiled, reserved in Heaven for them, an everlasting Kingdome, a Kingdome that cannot be shaken, everlasting Communion with himself, bosome Communion with himself in Glory, to have their Souls bathed in those Rivers of pleasure that are at his right hand for evermore, yea, the following the Lamb whereso ever he goes, to be triumphing in his Praises, to be sounding forth those Halelujahs to him that sits upon the Throne for ever, to live and lye in his continual embraces? *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath laid up for them that love him.* Now, because with the eye of Faith they look upon these things, and

they fully expect to enjoy them, therefore hence it is, they do so highly prize Jesus Christ.

Reas. 5. Jesus Christ is very precious to Believers, they do most highly prize him, Because Faith you must know, is a uniting grace, an espousing grace; it is the Wedding Ring, as I have sometimes told you, that makes up the Match between Jesus Christ and the poor Soul; as soon as ever a man comes to be a Believer, to take Jesus Christ to be his Head, his Husband, his Portion, then is the Match made up between them; *Christ dwels in our hearts by Faith*, Eph. 3. 17. Now then, Believers being thus espoused to him, thus united to him, they cannot but dearly love him. As a Wife, that hath pitcht her affections upon a Husband, and forsaken all others, and hath vowed to cleave to him, and him only, while they both shall live, therefore she does prize him above all the men in the world; so when the Soul is once united to Christ, married to him (*Thy Maker is thy Husband*) when the Soul is espoused to Christ, it cannot but dearly love him, and forsake all others in comparison of him.

Reas. 6. Jesus Christ is very precious to Believers, Because true Faith ever works by Love, *Gal.* 5. 6. *For in Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.* True Faith will make a man deal love the Lord Jesus Christ; now, if we love him, we cannot but prize him whom we love so dearly.

The *Use* I shall make of this Point briefly;

First, For *Examination*. And O that you and I could engage our own hearts a while, and call our

our selves to account in sad and serious thoughts, whether Jesus Christ be precious to us, yea or no; Is he highly prized by you, even by you that hear me this day? Can you say with the Church, *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the cheifest of ten thousand?* And with St. *Paul, I esteem all things but drosse and dung, in comparison of Jesus Christ*; the whole world, the glory, the beauty, and treasures, and pleasures of it, but as a heap of dung, in comparison of him? this pitch and frame you must come unto, or else you can never have any assurance that Christ is yours, and that you are his; for, as our Saviour saith in the like case, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me*, &c. Math. 10. 37. So here, if any thing be more prized than Jesus Christ, you can have no assurance that Christ is your portion; if any thing be preferred before him, or prized more highly than he, is there not great need then, that you should enquire whether Jesus Christ be precious to you, yea or no? That I may presse you to this enquiry, consider but this one Motive; this is one of the surest Characters to distinguish between a sincere-hearted Christian, and an Hypocrite: For, he that is sincere, and upright-hearted, does lay Jesus Christ the neareſt to his heart, and sayes, *None but Christ, nothing but Christ*; whereas ever observe it, and you shall see a Hypocrite hath alwayes something that lyes neerer to his heart, than Jesus Christ does; however he may shew much love to Christ with his mouth, yet his heart goes after his covetousnesse, or after some base lust or other; as God told the Prophet, *Ezek.* 33. 31. *And they come unto thee as my People cometh, and they sit before thee as my*

my People, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth, they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſſe. So that Jeſus Chriſt hath not the heart of a Hypocrite; he may have the mouth of a Hypocrite, a ſhew of love, but there is ſomething ſtill that doth lye nearer his heart than Chriſt does. Look into the Parable of the Sower, and you will find that Seed that was ſown in the ſtony ground, it ſprung up and made a fair ſhew for a while, but there was ſomething lay between the Seed and the Soile; ſo there is ſomething that lyes between Jeſus Chriſt and the ſoul of a Hypocrite. You know the ſtory of the young man in *Matth.* 19. 22. When Jeſus Chriſt made him a fair proffer, *Go and ſell that thou haſt*, (ſayes he) *and give it to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in Heaven, and come and follow me.* He made a fair ſhew, but the world lay neerer his heart than Jeſus Chriſt did; therefore, when he bid him *ſell all, and give to the poor, he went away very ſorrowful.* And you know the ſtory of *Orpah* and *Ruth*, Ruth 1. *Orpah ſhe gave her mother-in-Law a kiſſe, and bid her Farewel, but Ruth clave to her mother Naomi.* So it is here, it may be an Hypocrite can complement with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, can give him ſome outward Ceremonial obſervance; but, when it comes to this, that he muſt part with any thing for Chriſt; when Chriſt tells him, If thou wilt be mine, thou muſt take me on my own terms, thou muſt look to bear my Croſſe, as well as to wear my Crown; thou muſt look for hatred, perſecution, a Croſſe, a Priſon, for my ſake, then he begins to ſhrink and draw back; I love Jeſus Chriſt well, ſayes he, but I love pleaſures

sures better, the world better, liberty better; still there is something that a Hypocrite prizes before Jesus Christ.

But then you will say, *How may I do to know that Jesus Christ is precious to me indeed?* I will tell you briefly.

First, See whether your desires be strongly carried out after the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they be vehement, constant, and industrious desires, or no; for, if your desires after Jesus Christ be right, they will be very vehement desires, like hunger and thirst, that are commanding: The appetite hunger it hath this property, not only to be violent in its desires, but to be terminated to one object; I must have food, sayes an hungry man, and nothing but food will please him; offer him Musick, no, that will not content him; offer him Gold and Silver, that will not content him, he must have food, and nothing in the world but food will content and satisfie him. So that Soul that hath a true desire after Christ, sayes, I must have Christ, and none but Christ will content me, Riches, Pleasures, Honours, will not satisfie my Soul, I must have Christ, none but Christ.

Secondly, And are your desires constant, and continued desires? It may be some men may have flashes of desires, when their Consciences are awakened, when they lye tumbling upon a sick-bed, or when the wrath of God begins to be kindled against them: But tell me, Are thy desires constant? Canst thou say with *David*, *My soul breaketh for the longing it hath unto thy Judgements at all times?* Psal. 119. 20. I know there may be an intermission of the act of desire, but then,

then, the constant bent of the Soul is Christward. As a Tradesman, that makes it his Trade to buy and sell, though he doth not alwayes buy and sell; so the Soul will be alwayes trading in desire for Christ, though there may be an intermission of desires.

Thirdly, Are they industrious desires, that make you not only to desire him, but to seek him? *The desire of our soul is to thy Name, O Lord, and to the remembrance of thee.* And then, *With my Soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my Spirit will I seek thee early*, Isa. 26. 8, 9. If so be your desires after Christ be right, they will put you upon all means of grace, and the using of them carefully, and conscientiously enquiring after him, and following of him in the use of every Ordinance. This is the first way, whereby you may know whether Christ be precious to you; See what your desires are, if they be strongly carried out after Christ, if they be vehement, constant, and industrious desires.

Secondly, Would you know whether Jesus Christ be precious to your Souls, yea or no? then see whether your love to Jesus Christ be a true love, unfeigned love, whether you love him in sincerity, or no: *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, Amen*, Eph. 6. *ult.* Implying, many love him not in sincerity. Thus you may know, whether you love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

First, you will remember Christ, your hearts will be much taken up with him: *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches*, Psal. 63. 6. Are your thoughts taken up with him? Secondly,

Secondly, if you love him in sincerity, you will hold no correspondency with sin, you will hate sin, and hate every sin.

Thirdly, If your love to Christ be sincere, it will be accompanied with smarting sorrow for your former unkindnesses to him; as *Mary Magdalen*, because she loved much, she wept much. Thus will such a soul say, *Against thee have I sinned, thee have I offended; with Judas I have betrayed thee, though thou didst never shed thy blood for him, as thou didst for me; therefore my sins are the greater, because against thee I have sinned.*

Thirdly, Would you know whether Christ be precious to you or no? let me then propound to you these three soul-searching Questions.

First, Tell me, what are you willing to give for Christ?

Secondly, What are you willing to lose for Christ?

Thirdly, What pains are you willing to take that you may obtain him?

First, If you would know whether Christ be precious to you, then answer this Question, What are you willing to give for Christ? I know nothing can be given by way of merit, do not understand me so; but what are you willing to give in the use of means?

First, Are you willing to give as much for Christ now, as you would give in a time of sickness, when you are lying upon your death-beds, when the soul sits upon the lips, and is ready to take its leave? are you willing to give as much now in health, as you would give in a time of sickness? Oh when a man lyes on his sick bed, and death knocks

knocks at his door, Christ then it may be would be very precious to him, oh what would he then give for a Christ? Those in *Noahs* time, that never regarded the Ark all the while it was a building, yet when the Flood came, what would they have given for an Ark then? What would you give for Christ at that time when you are upon a Death-bed, ready to be delivered by your Death-bed, to your cold Grave? Certainly, Christ is as precious now, as he will be when you lye upon a sick bed, when you shall look Death in the face.

Again, Are you willing to give as much for Christ now as at the day of Judgment? Oh what seeking and suing will there be to Christ at that day! Lord, pity me, Lord, own me, I am undone for ever without thee. Oh what seeking and suing will there be to Christ at that day! Certainly, Christ is as precious now as he will be at that day, when *he shall come in Flames of fire, taking vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not his Gospel*, 2 Thess. 1. 8. Can you be content to give as much for him now, as you would give in that day for him? Can you be contented to give as much for him, as a damned Soul would give for him, if it were possible he could purchase him? Certainly he is as precious now as he would be to a damned soul, if he could be made partaker of him.

In a word, tell me, are you willing to give up your selves to him, wholly to be ruled by him, to give up your Understandings to him, *to desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified?* To give up your Wills to him, to say, Rule in me as thou pleasest, so I may be but thine? to give up your

your Affections to him, to love him, to delight in him, to rejoyce in him, to ſay with the Apoſtle, *God forbid I ſhould rejoyce in any thing, ſave in the Croſs of Chriſt*, Gal. 6. 14. If you can do thus, then you have anſwered the firſt Queſtion, and you may know certainly, Jeſus Chriſt is precious to you.

Secondly, tell me, what are you willing to loſe for Chriſt, to part with for a precious Redeemer?

Firſt, Are you willing to part with your ſins, though they may be never ſo near and dear to you, though they be as your right hand and right eye? can you throw them away from you with deteſtation, *Iſa.* 30. 22. *Te ſhall defile alſo the covering of your graven Image, and the Ornament of thy molten Image of Gold; thou ſhalt caſt them away, as a menſtruous cloath, thou ſhalt ſay unto it, get thee hence*; they ſhall caſt away their Idols with deteſtation.

Again, can you be content to part with the World, your Eſtates, your Liberties, your comforts, any thing for Chriſt? Underſtand me thus,

Firſt, If they come in competition with him.

Secondly, If they ſtand in oppoſition to him.

Firſt, If they come in competition with him: Tell me, can you hate Father, Mother, Wife, children, any thing that is near and dear to you, if it ſtand in competition with Chriſt? Or any thing that ſtands in oppoſition to him; if any thing hinders the meeting of Chriſt and your ſouls, though never ſo near and dear to you, can you caſt it away? can you be content to part with it?

Thirdly, Anſwer me this Queſtion, What pains can you be contented to take, for the gaining of the

the Lord Jesus Christ? can you be as industrious and unwearied, in the pursuit of those unsearchable riches, that are laid up in Christ, as you are after these temporary and transitory riches, that oftentimes take to themselves wings and fly away? can you be as unsatiable, in seeking to gain Jesus Christ on the Lords Day, as you are unwearied in your Callings on the Week day? Certain it is, If Jesus Christ be precious to you, you will think no pains too great, you will think no cost too much, you will think no industry can be great enough, for the purchasing this Pearl of Price; you will, with the wise Merchant in the Gospel, sell all to purchase him; you will seek him in the Streets, as the Spouse did, you will seek him in the Assemblies, you will be driving a Trade still, that you may get more of him, more influences of grace from him, and more conformity unto him. This is the first Use of Examination, to discover whether Jesus Christ be precious to you, or no; if your desires be strongly carried out after him, if your love be a fervent and sincere love, if you can be content to give any thing for him, and to lose or part with any thing for his sake, and if you can be content to take any pains, and think no pains too great, to gain him, who is the Pearl of great price. The Lord make your own hearts your Judges in this particular. And so much for the first Use of Examination. There are three other Uses, a Use of Conviction, a Use of Information, and a Use of Exhortation: But I must refer them to another opportunity.

1. Pet.

1 Pet. 2. 7.

Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious ;——

I Have spoken to this Text in two Sermons already, upon the like occasion, of our solemn approaching to the Table of the Lord, and there are two Points of Doctrine I have drawn from these words ; the First is this, *That Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself.* The Second is this, *As Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself, so is he also precious to all believers, and highly prized by them.* This Point I spake to upon the last Occasion, and opened it to you, and made one use of Examination.

I now come to a second Use, that is, of Conviction : If it be so, that Jesus Christ is thus precious to all believers, then it follows, few, yea very few believers there are in the World, nay, very few of those that do profess the Name of Christ, because there are very few that do prize him, very few that make that high account of him, as becomes so rich, so precious, so invaluable a Redeemer.

But it may be you will say to me, Who are they then that do not prize Jesus Christ, who are they that do not value him ? I shall instance in four or five sorts of persons.

Fifst, They do not prize the Lord Jesus Christ, that see no beauty in him that they should desire him, that see no beauty in spiritual things, no beauty in Grace, no beauty in the peace of a good Conscience, no beauty in Joy in the Holy Ghost, in righteousnes and holines, for in these things consists the Kingdome of God, *Rom.* 14. 17. *For the Kingdome of God is not meat and drink, but righteousnesse, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Now those that see no beauty in those things that lead the Soul to Christ, in those things wherein the Kingdome of Christ consists, certainly they do not prize Christ. This is the great fault of the *Jewes*, for which they were rejected, as the Prophet *Isaiah* foretold, *Isa.* 53. 2, 3. For *He shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry ground; he hath no form, nor comlines; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* The *Jewes* look upon Christ with a carnal eye, they look upon his humanity, the meanesse of his Birth, born in a Stable, the lowness of his Parentage, the House of *David* being at that time but like the stump of a Tree, a dry Root, he coming from the Root of *Jesse*, they look upon his attendance, a company of poor Fishermen, they look upon his condition, not having a house to lay his head in, therefore they slight him, reject him, and despise him. Just thus it is at this day; many there are that value not at all spiritual things, neither value they the Kingdom of God. *The Kingdome of God cometh not with observation*

ſervation (Luke 17. 20.) it cometh not with outward Pomp and Splendour; it comes not with obſervation, becauſe it is a hidden Kingdome, a ſpiritual Kingdome, inward, Faith, and Love, and ſelf-denial, and other inward Graces, becauſe theſe are the things belonging to the Kingdome of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and being not obvious to carnal eyes, therefore they ſee no beauty in them. Therefore this is a plain token they ſee no beauty in Chriſt; they that ſee no beauty in Chriſts Kingdome, in his Ordinances, and in his ſpiritual comforts, certainly they ſee no beauty in Chriſt: There wants no beauty in him, but carnal men want eyes to behold him. Certainly, ſpiritual things they are the moſt precious and invaluable Commodities that are; therefore becauſe thou ſeeſt no beauty in Heaven and in heavenly things, ſpiritual things, the Graces of the Spirit, and the comforts of the Spirit, thou art one that doſt not prize the Lord Chriſt.

Secondly, They do not prize the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that prefer their luſts before him, that prefer the wills of the Fleſh, and of the Mind, as the Greek word ſignifies, before him, in 2 *Eph.* 3. Thoſe that ſay in their hearts, though it may be they will not ſpeak it with their mouths, but it is the language of their hearts, *We will not have this man to reign over us, we will walk in our own crooked wayes, and not in the wayes of Chriſt, in the wayes of holineſs.* Certainly, they that prefer their luſts before him, they do not prize him.

Thirdly, They that do not prize the Meſſengers of Jeſus Chriſt, they do not prize Jeſus Chriſt himſelf: So ſayes our Saviour himſelf expreſly, *Luke*

10. 16. speaking to his Disciples, and in them to his succeeding Ministers, *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* When *Hanun* the King of the children of *Ammon*, cast contempt on the Messengers and Ambassadors of *David*, and so wickedly entreated them, by cutting off their Garments, in the middle to their buttocks, and shaving off the one half of their Beards, 2 *Sam.* 10. It was a plain token that he despised *David* also, because he despised his Ambassadors.

Fourthly, They do not prize the Lord Christ, that can keep the best room they have, I mean their hearts, for creature comforts, but the Lord Jesus Christ, as I may say, with reverence, is thrust into the Stable. But you will say, how does that appear? thus; when a mans Liberty, or Estate, or Friends, or outward reputation, come to be hazarded, if Christ be owned, that man now that can prefer any of his creature accommodations, rather than run any hazard for the Lord Jesus Christ, certainly that man does not prize Christ. When it comes to a Point, that a man must part with some, or all of his comforts and accommodations, rather than part with his Saviour; that man that can part with his Saviour, rather than his comforts, certainly that man does not prize Christ. Thus was it with the *Gadarens*; when it came to the Point, that they must part with their Swine, or with Jesus Christ, they would part with Christ, rather than with their Swine.

Fifthly, They that do not prize his Ordinances, that do not keep close to him, and to his way of Worship,

Worship, those that do not set their hearts and souls to seek him, to seek his Truth, to seek his face, to rejoyce in his love, to content and satisfie themselves in him, to say, If I have but Jesus Christ, though I be as poor as *Job* upon the Dunghil, yet I am rich enough; certainly, these do not prize the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh that we could learn to be true to our own souls, and to love our selves so well, as not to beguile our own souls in the latter end. That's the second Use of Conviction.

Thirdly, A third Use is this, If Christ be thus precious to all true believers, then there are these three or four lessons, or Doctrinal Inferences, that may be gathered from this conclusion, or point of Doctrine.

First, If Jesus Christ be so precious to believers, then it follows, that Faith is an exceeding rich and precious Grace, it is called precious Faith, *Pet.* 2. 1. 1. *Simon Peter, a Servant, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious Faith with us, through the righteousnesse of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* But why is Faith so precious a Grace? because it makes Christ so precious to our souls, it makes a man look upon Christ with an admiring eye, it ravishes the soul with the love of this precious Redeemer, and it makes him break out and say, There is no Beloved like my Beloved; Oh the Dignity of his Person! Oh the Vertue of his Blood! Oh the value of his Sufferings! Oh the sweetnes of his Graces! Oh the Comforts of his Spirit! Oh the excellency of those glorious and transcendent hopes that are laid up in him! You read of *Moses*, that he scorned all the treasures of *Ægypt*; why? because *by Faith he beheld him that*

that was invisible, Heb. 11. 26, 27. By the eye of Faith he lookt upon Jesus Christ, and he saw more beauty in him, than in all the treasures of *Egypt*; more sweetnes in one smile of his face, than in ten thousand worlds: Oh therefore that you and I, could learn to trade for Faith more a great deal, than for the World: Oh let us trade for this rich and precious Grace, look out for Faith, and long for Faith, and strive to believe, for until this Grace of Faith be planted in your hearts, Jesus Christ and you are strangers, Christ and you stand at a very great distance; but as soon as ever Faith is planted in the soul, then there is instantly a closing with Christ, as quick a closing between Christ and the soul, as there is between the Loadstone and the Iron; the Soul presently closes with him, and cleaves to him, as soon as ever it begins to believe.

Secondly, If Jesus Christ be so precious to believers, then learn this lesson, by way of Inference, *That believers are rich and honourable Persons*; why? *because Jesus Christ is to them both Riches and Honour.* I gather this from the signification of the word, in the Greek Text; Jesus Christ is both a price and an honour to his, for the word τιμὴ signifies both a price and honour: Jesus Christ therefore is a price to Believers, he is a Pearl to them.

First, He is a Pearl of inestimable price, to all those that have got an interest in him; this Pearl of Price is better worth than ten thousand worlds, by him we are enriched in all things, 1 *Cor.* 1. 5. *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the Grace of God, which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in*

every

every thing ye are enriched by him. And you read of the unsearchable Riches of Christ, *Eph.* 3. 8. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* O when a man once is gotten into Christ, his riches cannot be told, he hath the Riches of Redemption, the Riches of Christ Merit, the Riches of Christs Spirit, and he hath the rich and glorious Purchase of Christs Blood; he hath all these for his portion, he may say all these are mine; and can you name such Riches as these are? they are called unsearchable Riches: *Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of man to conceive,* what those unsearchable Riches are, which a believer receives by Christ; therefore a Believer is infinitely rich.

And then, a Believer is truly honourable by him, the Lord Christ is not only a Price, but an honour to him, he is a most glorious Redeemer: Nay, Christ is not only glorious, but he is called Glory it self, *Isa.* 40. 5. *And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* That is, Christ shall be revealed. The Prophet declares, that *John* Baptist, speaking of the Coming of Christ, sayes, *The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.* Jesus Christ is called there the Glory of the Lord: So in the New Testament he is called The Glory of his people, *Luke* 2. 32. *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy people Israel.* Indeed, no Glory can be put upon any one like this, to be a Member of Christ, to be the Spouse of Christ, to be the Ser-

vant of Christ. *Theodosius*, that good Emperor, esteemed it a greater honour to be *Servus Christi*, than *Caput Regni*, a greater honour to be a Servant to Christ, than to be Head of the Empire.

Thirdly, Learn this Lesson, by way of Inference, If Jesus Christ be so precious to believers, then certainly, Unbelief is a most dangerous, a most damnable, a soul-destroying sin; why? because Unbelief makes Jesus Christ to be of no worth, no value, no price, no advantage at all. To you that do believe, he is precious; I, but sayes the Apostle, in the next words to the Text, *To them which be disobedient*, that is, to them that do not believe, *he is a Stone of stumbling, a Rock of Offence*; to unbelievers, the Lord Jesus Christ, is as a thing of nought; it is the Apostles own expression. St. *Peter* speaking of the *Pharisees*, and the Rulers, *Acts* 4. 11. *This is the Stone, which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the Head of the Corner.* They made nothing of Christ. To an unbeliever Christ is of no more worth, than the dirt unde his foot, with Reverence be it spoken. An unbeliever, he would sell Christ for thirty pieces of Silver, with *Judas*, nay he will prefer five shillings before him. Of all sins, take heed of this sin, for this is the evil heart, that is departing from the living God, *Heb.* 3. 12. *Take heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Hereby the soul begins to depart, to depart, to depart, till at last it hears that dreadful Sentence, *Depart ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* As Faith is the first return of the soul to God, so unbelief is the first departing of the soul from God;

God; take heed therefore of unbelief.

Fourthly, Another Leſſon by way of Inference, is this, If Jeſus Chriſt be ſo precious to thoſe that do believe in him, O how infinitely precious will he be to them that do enjoy him! If he be ſo precious to them that ſee him by the eye of Faith, how infinitely precious will he be to them that ſee him face to face, when our Faith is brought into fruition, and our hope into our hand! *Abraham* ſaw Jeſus Chriſt afar off, he ſaw him when he was to come, two thouſand years before he came into the world; *Abraham* by an eye of Faith ſaw him, and he rejoyced, the Text ſayes, *John* 8. 56. *Your Father Abraham rejoyced to ſee my day, and he ſaw it, and was glad.* If he ſaw him when he was at ſuch a diſtance, and rejoyced, how does *Abraham* rejoyce now, when he ſees him face to face! Long for that time, when you ſhall have a full ſight of him which is called *The Beatifical Viſion*; that is the Viſion that will make you everlaſtingly bleſſed. One ſight of Jeſus Chriſt in Glory, will ſo ſatisfie the Soul, ſo beautifie it, ſo rejoyce it, *That* (it is an expreſſion that *Auſtin* uſed) *if ſo be a man were in Hell, if you could ſuppoſe ſuch a thing to be, and had but one glimpſe of the Beatifical Viſion, it would ſwallow up all the bitterneſſe of Hell it ſelf.* And this is that which Chriſt hath both promiſed and prayed for; he hath promiſed, *We ſhall ſee him as he is*, and he hath prayed for it too, *John* 17. 24. *Father I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou haſt given me, for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world.* O long for that day, when you ſhall ſee Jeſus Chriſt

as he is, see him in his Glory, then he will be infinitely and unconceivably precious indeed, and that to all Eternity. That's the third *Use* of *Information*, in these four Lessons, That Faith is a most precious Grace; That Believers are rich and Honourable Persons; That unbelief is a dangerous, and damnable, and soul-destroying sin; and That the sight of Jesus Christ face to face in Glory, will be infinitely and unconceivably precious and glorious indeed.

A fourth *Use* it is for *Exhortation*. If Jesus Christ be so precious to Believers, then let me beseech you, and perswade you, and prevail with you, and the Lord bow your hearts to hearken to this *Exhortation* this day. As ever you desire to have a certain proof and evidence, that you are true Believers, and that you are true Members of Jesus Christ, and that you are real Saints (for there are many nominal, but there are but few true Saints) that you are true Servants of Jesus Christ, and truly united to him, and have communion with him, and have infinite precious priviledges by him; O then do you learn to prize Jesus Christ at a high rate, set a high price upon this precious Redeemer, let him be highest in your esteem, do you labour every day, that he may be more and more precious, and amiable, and beautiful in your eyes: Remember but that speech of our Saviour, *Luke* 14. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple. He that does not hate Father*, &c. These words must not be understood simply, as if our Saviour would have us to hate our Relations, as

Father,

Father, Mother, Wife, Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, and our own lives, certainly that is not the meaning of the words of our Saviour, that he would have us to offer violation to the Law of Nature; it is not spoken therefore simply, but comparatively, he that does not love me so much, so as to hate all others in comparison of me, he that does not prize me before Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Brethren, House, Lands, yea life it self, and all things that are desireable, such a one hath no interest in me, and shall have no benefit by me. Now because it is an *Exhortation* of such infinite concernment, therefore I shall divide it into three Branches.

First, I shall shew you the manner how you should prize Christ.

Secondly, The Motives which may perswade you to it.

Thirdly, The Means that may help you in it.

First, For the manner how you must prize Christ. It may be you will say, *In what manner must we prize Christ? In what manner must Christ be precious to us?* Prize him in your Understandings, in your Choice, in your Affections, and in his Ordinances.

First, In your Understandings, desiring to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, 1 *Cor.* 2. 2. *And count all things but dross and dung, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.* Indeed there is a thousand times more worth, and beauty, and sweetnesse, and excellency in Jesus Christ, than you can know; as he said, *That man that knows Jesus Christ well, although he be ignorant of all other things, he is the right*

right knowing man. If a man had all the learning of both Universities concentred in himself, and yet ignorant of Jesus Christ, he were but a poor simple Sot.

Secondly, Prize Jesus Christ in your Choice, to pitch upon him as the adæquate object, satisfying object of your Souls; pitch upon him as the only excellent One. As a woman that selects and singles out one man from amongst all the rest, upon whom she places all her affections, for her husband; so do you select and choose out Jesus Christ for your Beloved, and say, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none on Earth that I desire in comparison of thee.*

Thirdly, Prize Jesus Christ in your Affections; love him above all expressions of love, labour to be sick of love towards so sweet and precious a Saviour, as the Spouse was, *Cant.* 2. 5. *Stay me with Flaggons, Comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of love*; saying as *David* did, in that mournful Elegie which he made for *Saul* and *Jonathan*, speaking of *Jonathan*, says he, *Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women*, 2 Sam. 1. 26. *I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me, thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.* ——Then trust in him as the Rock of your Salvation, trust to his Wisdome to lead you, in his Power to support you, trust in his Mercy and Merit to save you. —— Again, Do you rejoyce in him, to say as the Virgin *Mary* did, *My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour.*— And cleave to him, as to that Rock that only can deliver you, both from the raging Ocean of Gods everlasting displeasure,

displeasure, and from the leaking boat of your own graces; prize him in your Affections.

Fourthly, Prize him in his Ordinances; In his Word, *Oh how sweet is thy Word, O Lord*, that brings me good tidings of a blessed Redeemer! The Word of God is as a Letter sent from a dear and precious Husband to his Wife. And prize him in the Sacraments, which is as a Love-token, or Ring sent to you from the Beloved of your Souls; O how should you prize these Ordinances! In the Sacrament by an eye of Faith, you may see him bleeding, and pouring out his Soul an offering for sin; in the Sacrament, you may see him crying and dying for your sakes; in a word, esteem one hours communion with him, better worth than all the pleasures in the world; as that Noble Marquess of *Italy* did, who said, *He was not worthy of Christ, that did not esteem one hours Communion with him, better than all the treasures in the world.* So much for the Manner how we must prize Jesus Christ.

Secondly, For the Motives that may perswade you to it; and O that I knew what Motives might raise up your esteem of this precious Redeemer: I will name but these three.

Will either worth, or beauty, or excellency, or sweetnesse, or soul-satisfaction, win upon your hearts; all these are to be found in him: He is an All-sufficient Saviour, All-sufficient for Justification, his blood can pardon; All-sufficient for Sanctification also, for his blood can purifie; All-sufficient for Redemption, his blood can deliver from wrath to come. Do but consider how precious this Christ is in himself, as I shewed you in the former

former Doctrine, precious in his Person, precious in his Titles, precious in his Offices, being a King, Priest, and Prophet, precious in the purchase of his blood.

Secondly, I beseech you to consider, that Jesus Christ is the only desireable good. The common vote and voyce of the world, is this, *Who will shew us any good?* Psal. 4. 6. But why do you not say, Who will shew us Jesus Christ, who is indeed the only needful good, the All-sufficient good, the Soul-satisfying good; assure your selves, nothing under Heaven can do you good without him, nothing under Heaven can be good if you want him; what are riches without Jesus Christ? what is Gold and Silver without Jesus Christ, but rotten stinking dung? what are the most Royal Robes that ever were put on by the greatest Emperour, without Jesus Christ? what are they but poluted clouts? what is the most Princely Palace without Jesus Christ, but a Pest-house? what is Birth, Endowments, Education, without Jesus Christ, but glittering sins? So your choicest Comforts and Accommodations without Jesus Christ, they are no better than gilded damnation; what are all your outward Blessings without Christ? no better than Curses. And as nothing is good without him, so nothing can do you good without him; there is no Creature in Heaven or Earth, that can do you good without Christ, neither Men, nor Angels; if you had all the Angels in Heaven to speak for you, they could do you no good without Christ; God himself will do you no good without Christ, he will not (if I may use such an expression) he will not truck or trade with you, he will not exchange

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one word in the busineſſe of Salvation, but by Christ, *John* 14. 6. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father, but by me.* You cannot have any accesse to God, approach to him, to stand up for your lives, or the life of your Souls, without him who is the life of your lives, and the Soul of your Souls: Pray tell me therefore, Are you contented to perish for ever in your sins? Are you contented that the Curses and Threatnings of the Law, those treasures of wrath, that they should be your portion? Are you contented to be banished from the presence of God, and to be sent into a Dungeon of darkneſſe, there to be, and to be most miserable is all one? Are you contented to be sent to *that blackneſſe of darkneſſe for ever?* as the Apostle calls it, *Jude* 12. I know you are not; O then, why do you not prize Jesus Christ, by whom alone it is that you may escape eternal wrath and vengeance? *Isa.* 55. *Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which will not satisfie?* Why do you trifle away your time in impertinencies, in things that will not profit? why do you poure out your hearts on every lust and vanity, and in the mean time neglect him, who only can give you remission of sin, and a right to the Promises, and reconciliation with God, and Eternal Salvation?

Thirdly, Let me use one Motive more, Do but consider how infinitely precious the Lord Jesus Christ is to God the Father! O what account does he make of him! he esteems him the Son of his Love, the Son of his Bosome, the Delight of his Soul, *My Servant in whom my Soul delighteth.* Jesus Christ was both a Son and a Servant in our flesh,

flesh, when he took our Nature, and became our Surety, *Isa.* 42. 1. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth Judgement to the Gentiles.* What account do the Saints in Heaven make of Christ? they look upon him as the life of their lives, and the Soul of their Souls, as the Heaven of their happinesse, as the joy of their joy; the Heaven that the Saints now enjoy, it is the beholding of Jesus Christ now in Glory. Nay, do but consider what account sinners will make of him, they that now slight him, that prefer every base lust before him, that mind the getting of every thing but Christ; O what account will they make at the great day, when they shall call to the Mountains to fall on them, and the Hills to cover them! O what would they give for a smile of his face at that day, when, if they had ten thousand worlds in their possession, they would give it for a smile of his face! will Christ be so precious hereafter, and shall he not be precious now? will not these Motives work upon you? are they jests and fables? If my Brethren such Arguments will not prevail, for my part I am out of hope to prevail with you.

Thirdly, Let me but shew you some Means, that may help you to prize the Lord Christ, to make him precious to your Souls. The Means or Helps briefly, are these four or five.

First, The Soul must be convinced of the indispensable need that it hath of Jesus Christ; it is necessity that does inhance the price; for till the Soul be convinced of this, all the Arguments and Motives that we can use, are but like water that run

runs besides the Bottle, because the Bottle is stopt; all our Arguments prevail nothing, they take no impression upon the heart at all; but when a soul once sees, either I must have Christ, or I must perish for ever, I am lost, damned, and undone for ever, I am a fire-brand of Hell for ever; O Christ is now Christ indeed to such a Soul. If ever therefore you desire to prize him according to his worth, be much in the duty of self-examination, turn your eyes inward, to see the vileness of your Natures, the sinfulness of your hearts, and the manifold transgressions of your lives; reason thus with thy own Soul, What am I by nature, but a child of wrath, and an heir of Hell, and a bond-slave to Satan, a stranger to God, and an enemy to him, without God, and without hope? the number of my sins are more than the hairs of my head, my heart fails me in the remembrance of them; and one sin is enough to sink me into Hell, because it is committed against an infinite Majesty, and therefore it deserves an infinite punishment, for, where God does punish, he does punish infinitely, his Justice must have an infinite satisfaction, and there is no satisfaction can be given to God without blood, *Heb.* 9. 22. *For without blood there is no remission*, saith the Apostle; and no blood can expiate sin, can take away the guilt of sin, but the blood of an infinite value, and no blood is of an infinite value, but the blood of this precious Redeemer, that is that blood that is of invaluable and unconceiveable worth; for, for the Son of God to shed his blood, it is more than if all the Angels in Heaven, and Potentates of the Earth had laid down their lives to purchase one of our Souls;

therefore I must have this blood sprinkled on my Soul, or else I must resolve to perish everlastingly; consider therefore of the need that you have of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Do you desire to prize Jesus Christ? then labour to eat this blessed Passover with bitter herbs, I mean, labour to partake of this Sacrament with the bitter remembrance of all your former unkindnesses, all your miscarriages, failings, wandrings, and backslidings; O let the remembrance of these be as bitter to you as Gall and Wormwood; O labour to say feelingly, *It is an evil and bitter thing that thou hast provoked the Lord*, (Jer. 2. 19.) that thou hast grieved his Spirit, that thou hast forfeited his love, that thou hast abused his kindnesse, that thou hast turned his grace into wantonnesse; O say, I have done enough a thousand, and a thousand times, to damn my Soul, if the mercy of God were one jot lesse than infinite; if the blood of Jesus Christ should not quench the fire of his anger, it would be burning, and burning, and burning against me to all Eternity, even as long as God shall be God; it is a bitter thing that I have provoked my God. You should in this Sacrament *Look upon him whom you have pierced, and mourn over him, as one that mourns for the losse of his only Son, and be in bitternesse for him, as one that is in bitternesse for his first-born*, (Zech. 12. 10.) that is the Image of his Person, and is as it were the prop and stay of his Family. This is certain, my Brethren, there are none that do prize Jesus Christ so much, as they that are stung with the sense of their own sinfulnesse, of their own vilenesse; none prize the Lord Jesus Christ so much, as they that

that most of all feel the burthen of their own sins. Let me give you two remarkable examples, the one of a man, the other of a woman. Did ever man prize Jesus Christ more than St. *Paul*, that counted all his excellencies but as dirt under his feet, in comparison of Christ? he did esteem them as things that we cast to Dogs, as the word σκυβαλα signifies? Did ever woman prize Jesus Christ more than *Mary Magdalen*, who you know, washt his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head? what is the reason that St. *Paul* and *Mary Magdalen* prized Jesus Christ so much? the reason is, Because they were so exceeding sensible of the bitternesse of sin. *Paul* he cryes out, *I am of all sinners the greatest*. And *Mary Magdalen* you know was one out of whom was cast seaven Devils, a notorious sinner; now she being sensible of her sins, this made her *love much, because much was forgiven her*, Luke 7. 47. Take it for a Rule, they that slight their sin, will quickly slight a Saviour; where sin is slighted, a Saviour will be slighted also; where sin is a burden, and where it is bitter, there Jesus Christ will be very sweet; the bitternesse of sin adds a relish to the sweetnesse of Christ. O therefore eat this Passover with bitter herbs.

Thirdly, Then get your hearts unglewed from the world; I do not say, quite cast off your care of Earthly things, but this I say, the world should not have so much of your hearts; set your feet upon the world, set your hearts upon Jesus Christ. Carnal men are so glewed to the world, & glutted with it, that it is as hard a matter for them to be pulled from it, as you find a sucking child is un-

willing to part with a full Breast; O therefore use the world as if so be you used it not.

Fourthly, Then study his excellency, his beauty, his perfection, study the unsearchableness of the Promises, *All the promises of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen*; Study the unsearchable Riches of the Covenant of Grace, as Justification, Sanctification, and Adoption, which all come streaming in his blood; O that you would study these more than you do. What is the reason we prize Christ so little? it is because we know so little of him; if we knew him more, we should love him more, and prize him more, and cleave to him more.

Therefore in the fifth and last place, Do you desire to prize Jesus Christ? beg earnestly that God would open your eyes to see more of his beauty, and give you hearts to taste more of his sweetnesse, that you may say, *Lord shew me thy Glory, and it sufficeth*; O, one glimpse of thy favour, how sweet and precious will it be to me! Sayes our Saviour to the woman of *Canaan*, John 4. 10. *If thou knewest the gift of God*, if thou didst but know me, the greatest gift that ever God did bestow upon the sons of men, then, if thou knewest me, *Thou wouldest have asked of me living water*. If you did but know Jesus Christ, you would open your eyes to see more of him, and love him, and prize him more and more.

The last Use it is for Consolation; If Jesus Christ be so precious to all Believers, then here is a word of Consolation and Incouragement to all you that do prize him, to all you that do set your hearts upon him, to all you that do resolve to make him

him your Portion, your Husband, your Head, your Rock, your Redeemer, your All.

First, Can you say with the Apostle, *Phil.* 3. 3. *I rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh?* I can rejoyce in nothing in comparison of him, neither Riches, nor Honours, nor Parts, nor Parentage, nor in any of these outward possessions, O they are nothing to me in comparison of Jesus Christ?

Secondly, Art thou one that canst say, I can be contented to beg with him, to dye with him, to dye for him, to be under any reproach, or disgrace, to suffer any losse, so I may but gain him for my Portion?

Thirdly, Art thou one that dost study more conformity to him, as well as Communion with him, desiring to be *holy, as he is holy*, to have his Image stampt more and more upon thy Soul?

Fourthly, Art thou one that desirest to be Ruled by him, as well as to be Redeemed by him? *O Lord, Rule in me as thou pleasest, so I may be but thine*; I would be under thy Dominion, under thy Government; Lord, shew me the way thou wouldest have me to walk in:

Then know this for thy Comfort, it is a sign that thou hast a Spouse-like affection in thee to Jesus Christ, it is a token that Christ is dear to thee, that Christ lyes neer thy Soul indeed; and know this for thy Comfort, thou that prizest Christ here, thou shalt enjoy him for thy Portion to all Eternity hereafter, where he shall be Light to thine eys, and Musick to thine ears, and Comfort to thy soul, unspeakable Comfort to thy heart, and thou

shalt be satisfied with his fulnesse, when thou shalt have thy Soul bathed in those Rivers of pleasure that are at the right hand of God to all Eternity. O that you would think of these things, and lay them up in your hearts, and be careful to walk according to these Rules.

Consider what hath been spoken, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

THE

THE NECESSITY OF Humiliation.

Acts 16. 29, 30.

Then he called for a light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul *and* Silas;
And brought them out, and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?

THE *Lord knows who are his*, ſaith the Apoſtle, (*2 Tim.* 2. 19.) Namely, they whom he hath choſen to life eternal; and when once God hath ſet his Privy Seal upon them, he will call them, and bring them home to himſelf, in what place ſoever they be, though ſcattered amongſt the Heathen; in what condition ſoever they be, whether high, or low, rich, or poor, learned or unlearned; nay,

though they be lockt up under a calling that may ſeem to be a bar from coming home to God: You ſhall ſometimes hear a man ſay, My calling hinders me from God and Goodneſſe; but I would ſay to ſuch a one, if thou belongeſt to Chriſt, though thy calling be never ſo baſe and unſuitable to God, and the wayes of God, yet thou ſhalt be fetcht home, and brought home to Jeſus Chriſt at one time or other; witneſſe the Jaylor here the Text ſpeaks of, that had a calling bad enough, for inſtead of profeſſing Chriſt and his Goſpel, he was a perſecutor of Chriſt and his People, a rough hewen Fellow, that dealt hardly with theſe precious Servants of Chriſt, beating them, and putting them in the inward Priſon, and made faſt their feet in the ſtocks, as you may read in the 24. verſe; but *Paul and Silas ſang in Priſon*, verſ. 25. And take notice by the way, That God can ſometimes make a Priſon a Palace to thoſe that fear him. And as they were praying, and ſinging praiſes to God, the Lord ſhook the Priſon where they were, and with his ſhaking the Priſon, he did ſhake the Jaylors heart, he had an Earth quake within him, as well as without him; whereupon being greatly perplexed and amazed, the Text tells you here, *He calls for a light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* So that this Text tells you, and deſcribes to you, the Jaylors carriage when God firſt ſtruck his heart, and gave him a ſight of himſelf, and of his ſins; and in this carriage of the Jaylor, there are theſe three things very obſervable;

His Perplexity, his Courteſie, his Queſtion; his

his Perplexity, in *verſ.* 29. His Courteſie and Queſtion, in *verſ.* 30.

Firſt, His Perplexity, *He called for a light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas.*

Secondly, His Courteſie, the Text ſayes, *He brought them out.*

Thirdly, His Queſtion; *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?*

It is the firſt of theſe I principally aim at, namely, the Jaylors Perplexity, *Then he called for a light*; darkneſſe now was a terrour to him, becauſe he was a terrour to himſelf, *He was a Magor Miſſabib, a terrour round about*, Jer. 20. 3. *And he ſprang in*, that is, he ruſht haſtily into the Priſon, and like a man diſtracted, knew not what to do, nor which way to turn himſelf; *he came trembling*, being ſtrucken with inward horror, and terror of Conſcience; and pray obſerve it well; There is not the ſtouteſt man breathing upon Earth, but if God ſet his Conſcience againſt him, like a Dog to fly in his face, it will pull him down, and lay him flat, and fill him with that inward horror and terror, and perplexity, that he will be more afraid of himſelf, than of all the world beſides. Thus it was with the Jaylor here, when God came nigh him, and awakened his Conſcience, *he fell down before Paul and Silas*; God had given him a ſight of his ſins, and of the inviſible Majeſty of Chriſt, that was in thoſe his precious Servants, *Paul* and *Silas*, whom before he lookt upon as a couple of Rogues, and that the Whip and the Stocks, were good enough for them, but now he reverenceth them, and reſpects them, and falls down at their feet. Thus

you

you ſee what his Perplexity was.

My purpoſe is not to inſiſt upon every particular, but to pitch upon that which is principally held forth in the words; obſerve therefore, when God was about to work the great work of ſaving Faith, and ſound Converſion in the heart of this Jaylor, and by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, to bring him to Salvation, what is the firſt thing that he does? Firſt he humbles him, and ſtrikes him down, and lays him flat, he doth awaken and ſhake his Conſcience; this unbroken ſinner is now amazed, and perplexed, and aſtoniſhed, and he knows not which way to turn himſelf. So then the Obſervation I would commend to you from the words, is this:

Doct. *Sound Humiliation is a neceſſary Antecedent, or Fore-runner to Faith and Salvation.*

Would you have it plainer? then take it thus,

Thoſe whom God intends to make true Believers, and Heirs of his Everlaſting Kingdome, they are firſt ſoundly humbled, and made ſenſible of their own dangerous and damnable condition.

Look as a Timber-Tree, that a man intends for building, firſt he hews it down, and then he fits it, and ſquares it for the building; ſo that ſinner whom God intends to frame for himſelf, and build up by Faith to Salvation, God firſt caſts down to the ground, and lays him flat, and makes him ſenſible of his own loſt and dangerous, and damnable eſtate:

eſtate: Look into the Scripture, and you ſhall find that this is Gods Method, and Jeſus Chriſts Method, and the Holy Ghoſts.

Firſt, This is Gods Method, and this courſe he took with our firſt Parents, he arraigned them, and paſt a ſentence upon them, and pronounced a curſe againſt them, before ever he brings them to the knowledge of a Saviour, before ever he made that promiſe, that *The Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Serpents head.* Remarkable is that Scripture, *Job* 33. 21, 22. it deſcribes the manner of Gods converting a ſinner, *verſ.* 14. *God ſpeaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.* God calls, and cryes, and knocks, and tryes this way, and that way, and the other way, to bring the ſinner in, to bring him home by Converſion, but all will not do; what doth he then? Read *verſ.* 21, 22. God humbleth the ſinner to the very duſt, *His fleſh is conſumed away that it cannot be ſeen, and his bones that were not ſeen ſtick out, his ſoul draweth neer unto the Grave, and his life to the deſtroyers.* His meaning is this, He is made a very Anatomy, and God brings him to the very gates of Hell, and what follows, *Then he is gracious unto him, and ſaith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ranſome.*

So this was the Method of Jeſus Chriſt, this courſe he took with St. *Paul*, before he was converted, he unhorſt him, and humbled him, and ſtruck him blind, and all this while St. *Paul* muſt ſteep himſelf in ſorrow, before *Ananias* comes to him, and ſpeak words of comfort, *Acts* 9. Chriſt would have us *weary and heavy laden*, Matth. 11. weary with the work of ſin, and heavy laden with the

the weight of ſin, before he will give us eaſe; he will have the Soul thirſty, before he gives it the water of life, *Iſa.* 55. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters*; that is, to be ſenſible of the want of Chriſt, and the worth of Chriſt, before he gives the Soul to taſte of the waters of life; and he will have the Soul ſick of ſin, before the Phyſitian comes to it, *The whole have no need of a Phyſitian, but they that are ſick*, Math. 9. 12. He will have the ſinner ſick of his ſin, before he will cure him.

And this is the Holy Ghoſts Method too; for you ſhall read the Spirit of God, firſt *convinceth of ſin, before he convinceth of righteouſneſſe*, John 16. 8. Firſt, The Spirit of God convinceth of ſin for humiliation, before he convinceth of righteouſneſs for juſtification.

And this hath been the Method of all Maſter-Builders. *John Baptiſt* he comes levelling of Mountains, and caſting down proud ſinners before they come to Chriſt; and St. *Peter*, he prickt his Hearers to the heart, before he gave them any hope or comfort by a Saviour, *Acts* 2. He let them blood at the heart before he directed them how to be ſaved. But now, becauſe this is a weighty Truth, and it may pleaſe God to do good to ſome of you all the days of your lives, to know the Method and manner of bringing Jeſus Chriſt and the Soul together, (for this is all the work we Miniſters have to do), let me ſpeak to it by way of Explication, and ſhew you three things.

Firſt, What this humiliation is?

Secondly, Whether the like meaſure of humi-

liation

liation be wrought in all that are brought home to Jesus Christ, or no?

Thirdly, Why God is pleased to take this course to fit men for Faith and Salvation, thus first to humble them?

First, What this humiliation is? Divines describe a twofold humiliation;

1. *A Passive* } *Humiliation.*
2. *An Active* }

The Passive humiliation, is that whereby God humbles the sinner, in the first work of his Conversion; and it is called *A Passive Humiliation*, because the sinner is wholly *Passive*, and doth nothing at all conducing to his Conversion; and of this the Text speaks of.

Secondly, There is *An Active Humiliation*; and this is that whereby a sinner humbles himself before God; of this you read 2 *Chron.* 12. 7. *They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them.* Now it is not this latter I am to speak of; this, to speak properly, is nothing but the act of renewed repentance; but I am to speak of the first, namely, that whereby God in the first work of Conversion lets a man see the need that he hath of Jesus Christ, and it may be thus described, *Passive humiliation is a work of the Spirit of God, whereby a poor sinner being stricken with a sense of his sin, and fear of wrath, doth fly out of himself, and closeth with Jesus Christ*; I say, *It is a work of the Spirit of God*, because it is the Spirit that convinceth of sin, and by convincing of sin, he humbles the Soul; and hence it is the Spirit of God in the first work of Conversion, is called the spirit of bondage, *Rom.* 8. 15. *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again*

again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. Why is it called the ſpirit of bondage? not becauſe the Spirit of God brings the Soul into bondage, for the Spirit of God is a free Spirit, *Pſal.* 51. 12. *Uphold me with thy free Spirit; and where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty.* But he is called a ſpirit of bondage, becauſe he diſcovers to us our bondage, and lets the ſinner ſee the bondage and ſlavery wherein he is miſerably captivated under ſin and Satan. A man, before the work of Converſion is wrought, thinks himſelf a free-man; *We are Abrahams Seed, and were never in bondage to any, how ſayeſt thou we ſhall be made free?* John 8. 33. But now the Spirit of God comes, and lets a man ſee himſelf in the glaſſe of Gods Law, whereby he diſcovers ſin to be out of meaſure ſinful; and it lets him ſee himſelf in the glaſſe of Conſcience, and ſo comes to the ſinner, and ſays to him, juſt as *Nathan* did to *David, Thou art the man*, thou art he that lyeth under the guilt of ſin, and under the wrath of God, and under the condemnation of the ſecond death; therefore look to it. When the Spirit of God lets a man ſee himſelf, and his bondage, and that ſtate of woe and miſery in which he is, now he confeſſeth he is in the gall of bitterneſſe, and in the bond of iniquity. Again, I ſay in the deſcription of it, that *the poor ſinner is ſtricken with the ſenſe of his ſin, and with the fear of wrath.* Before a man is humbled, he is juſt like a man in a dead ſleep, in a drunken ſleep, he hears not, he fears not, he feels not; like the Drunkard that *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* 23. 34, 35. *Yea, thou ſhalt be as he that lyeth down in the midſt of the Sea, or as he that ly-*

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eth upon the top of a Maſt; they have ſtricken me, ſhalt thou ſay, and I was not ſick, they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when I ſhall awake, I will ſeek it yet again. But when once the Spirit of God comes to ſtrike the ſinner to the purpoſe, now ſin is revived, and Conſcience awakened and convicted, as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſaith, *I was alive once without the Law*, alive in my own apprehenſion, alive without the ſpiritual knowledge of the Law; *but ſin revived, and I dyed*, Rom. 7. 9. Then the Law ſhewed me I was but a dead man; O Conſcience now began to be awakened, and convicted. Senſe of ſin brings with it a fear of wrath, and hence it is, that the ſpirit of bondage is called a ſpirit of fear, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. *For God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of Power, of Love, and of a ſound mind.* And this fear doth awaken a man, and leave ſome kind of impreſſion upon the ſpirit of a man, ſo that he is awakened, and looks out for help out of himſelf. Again, I ſay *A ſinner thus ſtricken with the ſenſe of his ſin, flyes out of himſelf, and flyes to Jeſus Chriſt*; That is, he deſpairs of all hope, and help in himſelf; I dare ſay, he was never a true believing ſinner, that was not a deſpairing ſinner; underſtand me thus, there is a Religious deſparation, as well as a damning-deſparation; I ſay, a ſinner that is ſtricken with the ſenſe of his ſins, deſpairs of help in himſelf; this is an holy deſpair, whereby a man renounceth all hope of help in himſelf, and flyes to Jeſus Chriſt. This is a certain Rule, The leſſe a man truſts in himſelf, the more he truſts in a Saviour. That's the firſt thing, What this Humiliation is?

A ſecond Queſtion to be ſatisfied is this, *Whether the like meaſure of humiliation be wrought in all thoſe that are brought home to Jeſus Chriſt?*

I anſwer, No, ſome have more, and ſome have leſſe, according to the different tempers of mens ſpirits; ſome men are more froward, and ſome are more ingenious; thoſe that are openly prophane, ſtout, ſtubborn ſinners, they uſually have a great meaſure of humiliation, but now thoſe that are more flexible, have a leſſe meaſure of humiliation; to the firſt, God comes like a mighty ruſhing wind, to the ſecond ſort, he comes like a ſtill wind, in a more milde and melting way; ſometimes God breaks in upon the ſinners heart with open violence, as he did upon St. *Paul*, when he was ſmitten down to the ground, *Acts* 9. Sometimes again God opens the heart without any noiſe, as he did the heart of *Lydia*, *Acts* 16. Sometimes God ſuffers a ſinner to lye long under the ſpirit of bondage, thoſe eſpecially that he hath appointed for ſome ſpecial uſe and ſervice to himſelf; as the Timber that is appointed for ſome ſpecial ſervice, lyes long a ſoaking, before it be made uſe of. Sometimes again ſinners are ſet free from Legal terrors ſuddenly; now this is the leaſt meaſure of humiliation, wrought in thoſe that are brought home to Jeſus Chriſt, to make ſin odious, and loathſome to a man, and to make a man fly out of himſelf to Jeſus Chriſt. There is a twofold Paſſive humiliation.

1. *A Legal*
2. *An Evangelical* } *Humiliation.*

The Legal humiliation is that which conſiſts in Legal terror, and fear of wrath, and the ſenſe of Gods

Gods wrath, and horror of Conſcience, and fear of Hell fire.

Secondly, There is an Evangelical humiliation, and that conſiſts in the operation of Gods bleſſed Spirit, convincing a man of ſin; when the Spirit of God convinceth the ſinner, and by convincing him, empties him of himſelf, and by emptying him fits him for a Saviour. Legal humiliation, (*Pray mark*) though it makes a greater noiſe, yet it is not always abſolutely needful for all perſons, which I prove thus; It is not a grace, becauſe a man can never have too much grace, and a man may have too much Legal humiliation. Again, ſome Reprobates have had a great meaſure of Legal humiliation, and yet have periſhed; and ſome that have been converted have had but a little meaſure of Legal humiliation, and yet have been ſaved. I ſay, Legal humiliation, though it makes a great noiſe, is not abſolutely needful: But Evangelical humiliation, though it makes a leſſe noiſe, this is abſolutely needful to every perſon, becauſe this drives a ſinner out of himſelf, and cauſeth him to fly to Jeſus Chriſt, in a milde and melting way, making him *to look on him whom he hath pierced, and to mourn for his ſin, as he that mourns for the loſſe of his only Son that ſerves him.*

The third thing to be opened, is this, *But why doth God take this courſe, in bringing men to Faith and Salvation?* The Reaſons are theſe three.

Firſt, It is Equal.

Secondly, It is Fitting.

Thirdly, It is neceſſary.

Firſt, It is Equal, becauſe it is Gods way; and there is all the reaſon in the world, that God

ſhould bring us to Heaven in his own way; that it is Gods way, appears *Iſa.* 61. 1, 2. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,* (ſaith Jeſus Chriſt) *becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to Preach good tidings to the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Priſon to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.* So you ſee they are to be comforted that mourn, and they are to be bound up that are broken hearted; ſo that, till a man be meek and humble, and have a broken heart, he is out of Chriſts Commiſſion to comfort, Chriſt will ſay to ſuch, *I have nothing to do with thee, I am ſent to thoſe that are meek, and humble, and broken hearted,* Luke 19. 10. In *Mat.* 18. 11. *The Son of man came to ſeek, and to ſave that which was loſt.*— *Then* (may ſome ſay) *he came to ſeek and to ſave all, for all were loſt in Adam*; but that is not the meaning, but the meaning is, All that feel themſelves loſt; a man may be in a loſt condition, and yet never feel himſelf in a loſt condition; but when a man ſees himſelf to be in a loſt eſtate, and in a damned and undone condition without Chriſt, Chriſt came to ſeek and to ſave ſuch.

Secondly, It is Fitting that God ſhould bring us to Faith and Salvation this way; fitting, you will ſay, but how?

In reference to { *God.* / *Our ſelves.* / *Others.*

Firſt, In reference to *God*, becauſe by this humiliation, the Juſtice of God is acknowledged, and

and the Mercy of God is magnified; these are the two great Attributes that God will have magnified in the Conversion of a sinner. The Justice of God is acknowledged, when the sinner falls down at the feet of God, and saith, *Lord, against thee, against thee have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest*, Psal. 51.4. And the Mercy of God is wonderfully magnified, when he hangs out a white Flag of Pardon, after all the sinners rebellions and provocations, O now, mercy is mercy indeed! As a King, when he is about to pardon a Traitor, he suffers him to be brought to the place of Execution, and to have the Rope about his neck, and the Handkerchief drawn over his face; O how welcome is a pardon then to that Traitor! So a humbled sinner will say, mercy is mercy indeed, when he is convinced of his desperate, and undone estate and condition.

Secondly, It is fitting in respect of *our selves*, that we may know our selvs, *know the plague of our hearts*, 1 Kings 8. 38. God will have us to see and to feel, that *it is an evil, and bitter thing, that we have sinned against him*, Jer. 2. 19. *Thine own wickednesse shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing, and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.* God would have the sinner see his polution, and to cry out with the Leper under the Law, *I am unclean, I am unclean*, Levit. 13. 45. As *Miriam* for her miscarriage towards *Moses*, was smitten with a leprosie, *Moses* cryed to the Lord to heal her; no, stay, saith God, *If her*

Father had but ſpit in her face, ſhould ſhe not be aſhamed ſeven dayes? She muſt know her ſelf before ſhe be healed, *Numb.* 12. 10, 13, 14.

Thirdly, It is fitting in reſpect of *Others*, that they may not ſpeak reproachfully of God, and the wayes of God. If ſo be a ſinner could inſtantly ſtep out of an Ale-houſe to Chriſt, or out of a Whore-houſe to Chriſt; if there were no more required to get to Chriſt, than the putting of meat out of one Diſh into another, carnal men would be ready to have very low thoughts of God, that he is ſuch a one as themſelves, that he doth patronize and approve their wicked courſes; but God will have the mouth of iniquity ſtopt, and carnal men themſelves acknowledge, that the wayes of God are equal.

Thirdly, It is neceſſary that the Soul be humbled; I ſhall give you theſe five Reaſons of the neceſſity of it.

Firſt, Becauſe without this humiliation, the ſinner can never highly prize God. To an unhumbled ſinner, Chriſt is no more eſteemed (with reverence be it ſpoken) than the dirt under his feet, *Acts* 4. 11. *This is the ſtone which was ſet at naught by you Builders*; they made no reckoning of Chriſt at all. Tell an unhumbled ſinner of Juſtification, of Sanctification, of Adoption, of the hope of Glory, and the like, he makes no more reckoning of them, than the Children of *Iſrael* did of the *Manna*, who loathed it; but now when a ſinner is ſmitten with a ſenſe of ſin, and fear of wrath, and knows the burden of guilt upon his Conſcience, now Chriſt is Chriſt indeed, and he looks upon him with an admiring eye, and cryes out, O the dignity of his Perſon! the preciouſneſſe of his Blood!

Blood! the value of his Merits! the efficacy of his Intercession! the comforts of his Spirit! O the comforts and excellencies that are in this sweet and precious Saviour! *My Beloved* (saith such a soul) *is the choicest of ten thousand. The poor* (saith our Saviour) *receive the Gospel*; that is, those that are poor in Spirit, they like the wise Merchant will be contented to sell all to buy him who is the Pearl of invaluable price; an humbled sinner will say, *Give me Christ though I have a Cross with him, though I have a Prison with him, nay, though I dye with him, though I dye for him.*

Secondly, Without humiliation the sinner can never duely and diligently seek Christ. You know *The Law is a School-Master to bring us unto Christ*, Gal. 3. 24. The truth is, the Soul will never run to Christ to the purpose, until it be whipt by this School-Master. You know the story of the City of Refuge, the man-slayer never fled thither, until the Avenger of blood pursued him. The City of Refuge is Jesus Christ, and the sinner never flyes to Jesus Christ to purpose, until the vengeance of a sin-revenging God, and the curse of a condemning Law, and the horror of a self-accusing Conscience, pursue the Soul like a chased Deer; now it flyes to Jesus Christ to purpose.

Thirdly, Without humiliation the sinner will never obey Christ; an unbroken sinner is like an unbroken Colt, that is not tamed, or like an unbroken Heifer that will not submit to the yoak; Jesus Christ may command what he will, but he will do what he list. But when a sinner comes to be humbled and unhors'd, as St. *Paul* was, then he says, *Lord What wilt thou have me to do?* Though

it be never ſo croſſe to my carnal and corrupt Nature, yet I will do it. Before the ſinner is humbled, he is ever complaining of the unkindneſs of Gods dealing with him, but after he is humbled, he is ever complaining how unkindly he deals with God. *As all diſobedience ſprings from pride, ſo all obedience ſprings from humility.*

Fourthly, Without humiliation the ſinner will never conſtantly cleave to Jeſus Chriſt. There are many that ſeemingly cloſe with Chriſt for a while, juſt like thoſe that rejoyced in *John Baptiſts* Doctrine for a while, *John* 5. 35. *He was a burning and a ſhining light, and ye were willing to rejoyce in his light for a ſeaſon.* And you read of ſome that followed Chriſt for a while, *but they were offended, and went back, and walked no more with him*, John 6. 66. There are many Profeſſors juſt like the Corn caſt into the ſecond ground in the Parable, *It ſprang up for a while, but in time of temptation it withered*; why? *becauſe it wanted root*; and why did it want root? becauſe the Plough of humiliation went not deep enough: ſo there are many Profeſſors that prove Apoſtates, and diſloyal to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; but what is the Reaſon? becauſe they were never throughly humbled, they are weary of Chriſts yoke, becauſe they never felt the burden of the Devils yoke, and of ſins yoke; that Soul that hath felt the burden of Satans yoke, will ſay, that Chriſts yoke is a ſweet and eaſie yoke; they that are truly humbled, will never forſake Chriſt, but will cling and cleave to him, as a ſhip-wrack't Marriner doth to a Rock, he will not part with it, becauſe he knows it is for his life.

Fifthly, This humiliation is neceſſary, becauſe with-

without it we can never be conformable to Christ; for Christ was first humbled, before he was exalted, *He drank of the Brook in the way, before he lift up his head*, Psal. 110. 7. Thus you have the Doctrine opened, now let us see what Application we can make of this Poynt; and the *Uses* are but two, the one of *Instruction*, and the other of *Exhortation*. I shall give you two *Instructions*, & two *Exhortations*.

The first *Instruction* or *Lesson* by way of Inference, is this, *If sound humiliation be such a necessary Antecedent to Faith and Salvation*, then it justifies the practice of those Ministers, that take this course in convincing, and humbling, and wounding, and awakening sleepy sinners; you see what we Ministers may do; nay, you see what we must do if with care and Conscience we would discharge our duty, we must sometimes thunder and lighten, as St. *Paul* did when he made *Felix* to tremble, *Acts* 24. 25. We must strike the sinners heart with an Arrow of Conviction, as the Arrow that was shot at *Ahab* entred in at the joynts of his Armour, and pierc't his heart, 1 *Kings* 22. 34. We must hedge in the sinner with inevitable Conviction, and meet him with a drawn Sword, as the Angel did *Balaam*, Numb. 22. 23. We must sometimes knock at the doore of their hearts, and say to them, O thou unregenerate man, I have sad news to tell thee! Thou canst never, so long as thou art in this condition, see the face of God with comfort, or enter into his Kingdome; thou mayst see the face of God indeed, but it will be with frowns in his Fore-head, and indignation in his Countenance to thee, when he shall sentence thee to that ζόφος & σκότος, that *blackness of darkness for*

over, Jude 13. O drunkard, I have ſad news to tell thee! Thou muſt drink of the Cup of Gods wrath and indignation, which will cauſe thee to ſpew and fall, and never riſe again. O Swearer, I have ſad news to tell thee! that the wrath of God is like a flying Rowl, hangs over the houſe of every Swearer, *Zech.* 5. O ignorant and diſobedient ſinner, I have ſad news to tell thee, *Jeſus Chriſt will come in flames of fire to take vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not the Goſpel*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 7, 8. In a word, we muſt take any courſe to awaken ſinners out of their ſloth and ſecurity.

Two ſorts of perſons there are that oppoſe this kind of Preaching, but moſt do not love it, but diſlike it.

Firſt, The openly prophane and ſcandalous ſinner, that would fain ſleep in ſin, and go to Hell in a ſlumber, and therefore he looks upon ſuch awakening Sermons, as tormenting Sermons, *Rev.* 11. 10. *The two Prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the Earth.* O this convincing, quickning and awakening Doctrine, this is but a torment to many carnal men, who cry out, *What ado is there with theſe Miniſters? they will not let me be quiet, they torment me before my time.* Ah poor wretch! Art thou affraid to be tormented before thy time? and art thou not affraid to be tormented time without end? There are ſome Beaſts ſo furious, that there is nothing but the fire will tame them; ſo there are ſome men ſo bruiſh, that they are mad upon their evil wayes; as it is ſaid of the *Chaldeans*, *They are mad upon their Idols*, Jer. 50. 38. So ſome are ſo mad upon ſinful ways and courſes, that a Miniſter muſt ſpit fire in their faces to rouſe them

them out of their ſecurity, and ſpiritual Lethargy: Art thou angry with a Miniſter, who in tender compaſſion to thy Soul, would pluck thy Soul as a fire-brand out of the fire, and ſave it from eternal miſery, and burnings? if one of you have a leg broken, you will ſend for a Chyrurgion to ſet it, and you will be contented that he ſhall put you to great pain for the recovering of your Limb, and reſtoring you to your former ſtate again; and will you not allow your Miniſters to put you to ſome pain, and grief, and trouble, for the recovering of your Souls from that wound and breach that ſin hath made upon you?

A ſecond ſort that oppoſe convincing Preaching are *Antinomians*, that tell us there is no uſe of the Law under the Goſpel, and that Miniſters muſt preach nothing but Chriſt, and Grace, and Peace, and Comfort, and Mercy, and lead men to Heaven in a milde, and meek, and gentle way.

To this I reply, What, would you have us apply a Plaiſter where there is no ſore? would you have us apply a Cordial where they are not ſick? would you have us poure in the Oyl, where there is no wound? God himſelf poures not in the Oyl of Mercy, but into a broken Veſſel, *Iſa.* 61. 1. The Lord knows we delight not in preaching any terrible Doctrines to you, if you were but fitted for mercy; but if you are not fitted for Mercy, then, as the pricking Needle makes way for the ſewing of the Cloath together, ſo this kind of Preaching, convincing, and humbling the ſinner, makes way for the bringing of Chriſt and the Soul together, and therefore you may well bear with it.

A ſecond *Inſtruction* that we may learn from hence, is this, It ſerves to let us ſee what the reaſon is, that there are ſo few Believers, ſo few converted, and convinced; O Miniſters cannot ſpeak of this ſcarce without watery eys. Truly heretofore three thouſand were converted at one Sermon, but now there is ſcarce one that is converted with three thouſand Sermons. O whence is it that the work of Converſion is almoſt at an end in *England*, in *London*? It is rare to hear of a Soul converted; we hear of many that are perverted, that are led into by-paths of Error, and Hereſie, and Blaſphemy, and Schiſm, but it is a rare matter to hear of one converted; they are but few that ſee the need they have of Chriſt, that prize him, that believe in him, that obey him, that conſtantly cleave to him, but moſt men are very well contented to be in a natural condition, they are ſecure and quiet without Chriſt; but what is the Reaſon? becauſe they do not ſee the need they have of Chriſt, for if they did but ſee the need they have of him, they would ſay, they may better want light, than want Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Light, and by whom they may have the *Light of Life*, John 8. 12. They may better want Bread for their bodyes, than the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the bread and ſpiritual food of the Soul; *I am the Bread of Life*, John 6. If they did but ſee the need they have of him, doubtleſſe they would cloſe with him: but why do not they ſee the need that they have of him? The Reaſon is, Becauſe they are not humbled, they were never yet ſtricken with the ſenſe of ſin, they never yet ſaw the inſide of themſelves, they never, with the Jaylor in the Text, were affrighted, amazed, ſtricken

en down in the ſenſe of ſin. O this is the miſery of all miſeries, which Miniſters have moſt cauſe to complain of, that men are not fitted enough for Jeſus Chriſt, they are not loſt enough in themſelves for a Saviour, *Hoſ.* 14. 3. *With thee the Fatherleſs find mercy.* Were we more hopeleſs, helpleſs, and fatherleſſe, we ſhould find more mercy from the hand of Jeſus Chriſt. O that God would awaken, and ſhake ſome ſin-ſleeping Soul this day. O that this Doctrine thus opened, might be as a Thunderbolt to let ſome of you ſee the inſide of your ſelves. O poor ſinner, thou haſt an inſupportable burden of ſin and guilt lying on thy Soul, ready to preſſe thee down to Hell, and yet thou feeleſt it not; thou haſt the wrath of God hanging over thy head by the twined thread of a ſhort life, which it may be thou mayeſt not be free from one year, nay perhaps not one month, but thou ſeeſt it not; if thou didſt but ſee it, then thou wouldeſt cry out as he did in *Boſworth* field, *A Horſe, a Horſe, a Kingdom for a Horſe*; ſo thou wouldeſt cry out, None but Chriſt, nothing but Chriſt, ten thouſand worlds for Chriſt.

The ſecond *Uſe* is of *Exhortation*; And I have but two *Exhortations* to tender to you.

Firſt, I beſeech you, and exhort you in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (whoſe poor Meſſenger I am,) that you would labour to be convinced of the neceſſity of humiliation; believe it, be perſwaded of it, be convinced of it, that thou muſt be broken, if ever thou wouldſt have Jeſus Chriſt to bind thee up; thou muſt be ſick of ſin, if ever thou wouldſt have Jeſus Chriſt to heal thee; thou muſt be dejected and caſt down, if ever thou wouldſt

wouldſt have Jeſus Chriſt to comfort thee; if God therefore do not open thine eyes, and awaken thy Conſcience, and touch thy heart, I do pronounce againſt thee, that there is no Chriſt, no Heaven, no Pardon, no Peace, no Comfort, no Salvation for thee. O the miſerable, deplorable condition of all you that were never yet humbled, you that never yet were convinced of ſin, you that never taſted the bitterneſſe of ſin, you that never felt the burden of ſin, that never yet complained with the Apoſtle, *Rom. 7. O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* Some derive the word from a man that is troubled with the ſtone in the bladder, *O wretched man that I am!* O miſerable is the condition that you are in, you that never yet felt ſin to be ſin, that have not felt the burden of it, nor taſted the bitterneſs of it, you are not fit to come to Jeſus Chriſt, you are out of his Commiſſion, for he is ſent to the humble, and broken-hearted ſinner, *Iſa. 61.* It may be thou knoweſt what ſin is, and Chriſt is, and Grace is, notionally; but there is a great deal of difference between knowing and inward feeling; wretched was thy condition if thou didſt but feel it, but a thouſand times more wretched it is becauſe thou feeleſt it not.

My ſecond *Exhortation* to you, is this, If ſo be *ſound humiliation be a neceſſary Antecedent to Faith and Salvation*, then uſe the utmoſt of your endeavours, that you may be humbled, broken, and bruiſed ſinners, that you may be put into a capacity to cloſe with a Saviour. Now becauſe I know this is but a harſh *Exhortation*, give me leave to ſweeten it with theſe three Conſiderations.

Firſt,

First, Remember that the promises of grace and mercy are made to all humbled sinners, *Levit.* 26. 41. *If then their uncircumcised hearts shall be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquities, then will I remember my Covenant with Jacob, and also my Covenant with Isaac, and also my Covenant with Abraham, will I remember, and I will remember the Land.*

Secondly, Consider, God never looks with so much mercy and compassion on any, as those that are most humbled, *Jer.* 31. 18, 20. When *Ephraim* bemoaned himself thus, *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoak*; I have been proud, and stout, and stubborn under all thy Rods, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned. Surely after I was turned I repented, after I was instructed I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded.* Now in the 20. verse you have God bemoaning *Ephraim*, *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.*

Thirdly, Do but consider, That this is the ordinary way that God leads men to mercy by, God usually condemns before he justifies, he breaks before he binds up, he pulls down before he builds. *There is a time to pull down, and a time to build up*, *Eccl.* 3. That may be applyed to this purpose, this is, I say, Gods ordinary way; and would you have him to go out of his usual course and way? If one of you should say to your Neighbour, Let me come in at your window, or break down your wall, and then I will come in and visit you; what answer (think

(think you) would he make? If you do not come in at the dore, the ordinary way, do not come into me.

I but ſome may ſay, *What will you have us to do? Are we able to humble our ſelves? True indeed, when God hath firſt humbled us, then we are able to humble our ſelves; but you told us even now, In the firſt work of Converſion, we are meerly Paſſive, we can do nothing towards our humiliation, it is the work of the Spirit of God; you have now preach't free-will to us.*

To this I anſwer, True indeed, in a ſtate of Nature, we can do nothing that may pleaſe God, we cannot ſet one foot forwards in the way to Heaven; but yet let me tell you, There is never an unconverted ſinner but may do a great deal more than he doth, therefore I put you upon doing no more than you your ſelves can do, and that in theſe five Particulars, which I ſhall ſpeak a little to, and then have done.

Firſt, Though you cannot humble your ſelves in a ſtate of unregeneracy, yet you may ſuffer another to do it for you, you may ſuffer it to be done. A man for example, that is to be cut of the ſtone, though he cannot cut himſelf, he may ſuffer another to cut him; ſo a man that is ſick of this deſperate ſtony diſeaſe, of the ſtone in the heart, though he cannot take it away himſelf, he may ſuffer it to be done; when the Word of God ploughs up the Fallow-ground of your hearts, you may hold up the Plough, *Heb.* 13.22. You may ſuffer the Word of *Exhortation* which is tendred to you; when God wounds you by the Word, you may keep the wound open: Carnal men, when the Word hath wounded them, they lick themſelves whole

whole by carnal counsels, and carnal company, and carnal reasonings; O what a stir do men make to shake out the Arrow of Conviction, resisting the Spirit of God that is stirring in the Ministry of the Word upon their hearts! how many are there that come in Armour to Church, they come in their Coat of Male! how many harden their necks, that the Word cannot pierce them! Now this you must not do, you must suffer the Word to rifle and ransack your hearts, Let the Word smite you, as he said, *Psal.* 141. 5. *Let the Righteous smite me.* Let the Word break my head, or heart, so it may but work upon my Soul. When God rouzeth you, suppose in any sickness or cutting crosse, you may joyn with God in rouzing your selves; when God smiteth you, may not you smite upon your thighs, as *Ephraim* did, and say, *I am ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth?* Jer. 31. In a word, when God humbles you, may nor you humble your selves? therefore, in the fear of the Lord, resolve to wait upon an awakning, searching, soul-piercing Ministry, and blesse God for that Sermon that stabs sin at the heart, blesse God for that Ministry that speaks most to thy Conscience; you may suffer such a thing to be done, though usually such a Ministry is look'd upon as a bug-Bear, who preacheth nothing but fire and wrath, and vengeance, and damnation. O blessed is that Word that wounds corruption, but saves the soul, *I have hewed them by my Prophets, and slain them by the words of my mouth*, Hosea 6. 5. God would have his Word a saving Word.

Secondly, There is never a one of you but can ponder and weigh things in your thoughts, that you can

can do; for example, if you have a good price proffered for ſuch a Commodity, or ſuch a bargain propounded to you, or ſuch a match for your daughters, you can weigh it, and conſider it, you can conſider which is the beſt Commodity, and which is the beſt Match; ſo here, when the world comes, and offers you preſent pay, if you will but part with the peace of a good Conſcience, and comply and ſwim with the ſtream, you ſhall never ſee the inſide of a Priſon, you may have this Office, and that Office, this preferment, and that preferment; but now ſayes Jeſus Chriſt, Do but keep thy integrity, do but keep a good Conſcience, though thou ſuffer impriſonment, the loſſe of all things, thou ſhalt never loſe by it; for, for temporal loſſe, thou ſhalt have everlaſting gain, the Kingdome of Heaven; now you can ponder and weigh things in your minds, you can conſider whether it is beſt to enjoy the world for a while, to be free from Priſons and troubles, ſo as to part with the peace of a good Conſcience, and loſe God for ever; or whether it is beſt to endure troubles, to enjoy God, and the peace of a good Conſcience, and to enjoy an Eternity of Bleſſedneſſe; it is better to endure a thouſand Priſons, than to loſe the peace of a good Conſcience, and the favour of God; this, upon your conſidering and pondering, you will conclude, for the Devil he offers the pleaſures of ſin that are but for a ſeaſon; but ſayes Jeſus Chriſt, You ſhall have pleaſures at my right hand for evermore; no man in his wits but would ſay, it is better to have the pleaſures that are at Gods right hand for ever, than the pleaſures of ſin, which it may be I may not enjoy one yeer, not one

month,

month, not one day: So likewise, there is none of you but can consider where you will lye when you are dead; O sayes one, I will lye in such a Church, or in such a Church-yard; and cannot you consider, O but where shall my Soul lye? shall the Angels carry it into *Abrahams* bosome? or shall the Devils carry it into darknesse, that *blacknesse of darknesse for ever?* Jude 13. And you can meditate on the things that concerns this life; every one can ponder on the things that concern his own temporal estate and concernment; and certainly, you may as well meditate upon the things that concerns a future life, you may meditate on the joys of Heaven, and on the sorrows and torments of Hell, and the precious blood of Jesus Christ. There is a story of a man that read in a Book every day that had three Leaves, a white leaf, a red leaf, a black leaf; the white leaf of the Book, that was the joys of Heaven, the red leaf, that was the blood of Jesus Christ, the black leaf, that was the torments of Hell; you may look into Hell by contemplation, and meditation, that you may prevent Hell to all Eternity; you may meditate upon the blood of Christ, and steep as it were your souls in it by meditation, it may be it may soften them. It is said of the Goats blood, when nothing can soften an Adamant, the blood of Goats can; the blood of Christ, that can soften your hard hearts, when nothing else can.

Thirdly, A third thing you can do, you can sorrow more, and mourn more than you do; there is none of you, but can sorrow and mourn for outward losses, losse of friends, as Husband, and Wife, or Child, perhaps for the losse of a Horse; what

canſt thou mourn for the loſſe of a Child, and canſt thou not mourn for the loſſe of a Soul, when one Soul is worth all the Kingdoms in the world? If any of you have loſt a good Bargain, or miſt a good Market, you can grieve for this; O me-thinks you ſhould mourn for this, how many Market-dayes have I loſt for my Soul; I have burnt out many a precious light, and ſpent out my precious time; and can you not mourn for the loſſe of ſuch a Bargain as this is? Suppoſe one of you ſhould be ſent for before a Mighty Monarch, and ſhould be impeacht of high Treaſon before him; how would you tremble to appear before ſo Mighty a King, that hath power in his hands to cut you off inſtantly! O you and I muſt appear before the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, the King of Kings, that knows all the ſins and Treaſons that ever we have committed; and you ſhou'd bleſſe God if you are caſt into fear, and thereby be brought to mourn, and grieve, and ſorrow for your ſins, *Job* 23. 16. *For God maketh my heart ſoft, and the Almighty troubleth me*; that is, ſo ſit by troubling of me.

Fourthly, There is never a one of you, but may leave groſſe and ſcandalous ſins, which I prove thus; you can do it for fear of men, and you may do it much more for fear of God. A prophane Swearer, if he be in the company of a Godly grave Miniſter, he can refrain his mouth from vile talk, he can forbear his Oaths, and blaſphemous Speeches, and obſcene expreſſions. An Adulterer, if a boy be but in the Room of ſeaven years old, he will forbear to act his uncleanneſs, until the boy be out of the Room. If you can forbear groſſe ſins for fear of men, much more can you do it for fear of God.

If

if a boy can say his Lesson with a Rod, certainly he can do it without a Rod; if you can abstain from grosse sins for fear, certainly you can do it without. You read of the hypocritical *Pharisee*, he abstained from gross sins, *Luke* 18. *God, I thank thee* (saith he) *I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers*, &c.

Fifthly, Though it is true, a man in a state of Nature, is dead in trespasses and sin, yet then, at that time, he may do many good works, works morally good, works materially good, he may fast, and pray, and give Almes; therefore it is that *Daniel* speaks to *Nebuchadnezzar, Break off thy sins by righteousnesse, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor*, Dan. 4. 27. Certainly the Prophet *Daniel* would never have spoken so to him, if it had not been in his power to do it. The Apostle speaking of the *Gentiles*, though they wanted the knowledge of the Law, and had not the Law, (saith he) *yet they did by Nature the things contained in the Law, they were a Law to themselves, which shews that the works of the Law are written in their hearts*, Rom. 2. 13, 14. They that are in an unregenerate estate, they may pray, they may make Conscience of praying in their Families; though they cannot pray as they should, yet they may pray as they are able, they may fall down at the feet of God, and say, Lord, I am a poor sinful wretch, I cannot please thee, praying, or not praying; thou hast promised to give the spirit of prayer to them that ask it, *Luke* 11. 13. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father,*

giving the holy Spirit to them that ask him? Say, Lord give me thy Spirit to break my hard heart, take any way with me, ſo my proud heart may be humbled, and hard heart broken, that I may welcome Jeſus Chriſt to my Soul, that I may believe in him, and caſt my Soul upon him. So that Beloved, I put you upon no more than you are able to do, you may ſuffer the word of *Exhortation*, you can ponder and weigh the Word in your own hearts, you may ſorrow and mourn for ſin, you may abſtain from groſſe ſins, and you may do thoſe works that are morally good; do what you can do; men are not damned becauſe they can do no better, but becauſe they will do no better, *Math.* 23. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, I would have gathered thee as a Hen her Chickens under her wings, but ye would not. If there were no will, there would be no Hell*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*. Do what you can, ſet upon works of Holineſſe and Piety, ſtrive and put forth your ſtrength to the uttermoſt endeavour of your Souls, to get your hearts humbled, to ſee ſin, and to ſigh for it, to grieve and groan for it; lay your conditions to heart, be feelingly apprehenſive of that wrath that ſin hath kindled, of that Juſtice that ſin hath provoked, of that Mercy that ſin hath abuſed, of that vengeance and anger that ſin hath deſerved to be inflicted. O were we but thus humbled, we ſhould have cauſe to bleſſe God to all Eternity. I ſhall cloſe with one word to thoſe that have been under a ſpirit of bondage, that have been convinced, awakened, as this Jaylor was, that have had their broken bones, that have felt the burden of ſin, and it may be lye under that bur-

den

den at this day: O be you comforted, its better to be broken here than hereafter, it is better to be convinced here, than convinced hereafter, it is better to be humbled here, than for God to humble the Soul in Hell to all Eternity; God will make thy Valley of *Achor*, a Doore of Hope, *Hos.* 2. 15. Thou that art humbled now, shalt be exalted, and thou that mourneſt now, shalt be comforted.

CHRIST THE Bread of Life.

John 6. 35.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

THis Chapter contains in it that admirable and Heavenly Sermon of our Saviour, concerning the Bread of Life, wherein you may take notice of three parts.

First, The occasion of this Sermon, that was the Peoples following of him, *because they did eat of the Loaves, and were filled*, vers. 26.

Secondly, The Sermon it self, and that is from *vers.* 27. to *vers.* 59.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, You have the issue or consequence of the Sermon, some believed, and some revolted, some murmured, and some marvelled.

The Text that I have now read unto you, is part of the Sermon it self, wherein our Lord and Saviour, because of the stupidity and incredulity of his Auditors, doth again and again, both press and prove this Heavenly Doctrine, that he himself was *the Bread of Life*; *I am* (saves he) *the Bread of Life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.* In which Text, you may take notice of these two parts.

First, An undeniable Proposition, *I am the Bread of Life.*

Secondly, A comfortable Inference upon that Proposition, *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.*

I shall begin with the first, the evident and undeniable Proposition, *I am the Bread of Life*, which words must not be understood litterally, as if our Saviour was such Corporal Bread as could be chewed in the mouth, and digested in the stomach, as the *Capernaites* did fondly conceive, when they said, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* This was as grosse a conceit, as *Nicodemus*, who askt, *If he should go into his Mothers womb again, and be born.* But the words must be understood in a Metaphorical sense, That as bread strengthens the body, and revives the spirit, and supports the Nature of a man, and enables him to perform natural actions with more vigor, and vivacity; so likewise the Lord Jesus Christ strengthens the soul, and revives the spirit, and supports us in our spiritual life, and helps us to perform spiritual duties in a

spiritual manner, therefore saith he, *I am the Bread of Life.* He is not only bread, but the bread of life, because it is he that gives us spiritual life here, and preserves that life, and will hereafter give to us Eternal life in Glory; and therefore he is called, *The Bread of Life.* So then the Doctrine I would commend to you from hence, is this,

Doct. *The Lord Jesus Christ is that living bread, that gives Spiritual and Eternal life to all those that have a part and interest in him.*

This is a Truth so unquestionable, that it is no lesse than six times [illegible]ated in this one Chapter: And for the better [illegible]nfirmation of it, it may be demanded

First, *Wherein doth our Saviour resemble bread?*

Secondly, *And how doth it appear that our Saviour is better than bread?*

I shall speak briefly to them both.

First, *Wherein doth our Saviour resemble bread?* I will name but three particulars, though I know more might be reckoned up.

First, Bread you know it is prepared food; the Corn must be threshed, and winnowed, and ground in a Mill, and baked in an Oven, before it can be bread for us to eat. So the Lord Jesus Christ, he was threshed, as I may say, by afflictions and tribulations, *He was a man of sorrows*; and he was winnowed by temptations, he was baked, and scorch'd, as it were, in the Oven of his Fathers wrath, for it was *he that trod the Wine-presse of his Fathers*

Fathers wrath alone for us; and all this was done before he could be made fit bread, that is a fit Saviour for our Souls.

Secondly, Bread you know it is common food, it is common to the poor, as well as the rich; for the fooliſh, as well as the wiſe; the poor have bread if they have any thing; ſo the Lord Jeſus Chriſt he is a common Saviour, common for all ranks and conditions of men, for high and low, and rich and poor, noble and ignoble; all are beholding to Jeſus Chriſt here. *There is neither Greek, nor Jew, Circumciſion, nor Uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond, nor Free, but Chriſt is all and in all*, Col. 3. 11.

Thirdly, Bread you know it is the principal food, it is the ſtay and ſupport of a mans life, therefore it is called, *The ſtaff of bread*, Iſa. 3. 1. So the Lord Jeſus Chriſt he is the principal portion of the ſouls of all Believers, *He is the choiceſt of ten thouſands*, Cant. 5. 10. We may better want any thing than bread. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is as I may ſay, not only the Food of our Souls, but the Soul of our Souls, and the Life of our Lives.

Secondly, It may be demanded, *But wherein doth Jeſus Chriſt excell this corporal bread?* I anſwer in theſe four reſpects.

Firſt, Corporal bread, though it do help to preſerve life, yet it cannot give life; but now the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is he that gives ſpiritual life, he begets it in his People, *Epheſ. 2. 1. You hath he quickned, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* And hence it is that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is called the ſecond *Adam*. *The firſt man*

Adam

Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickning Spirit, 1 Cor. 15.45 And in *John* 5.21. *For as the father raiseth up the dead, & quickneth them, even so the Son quickneth whom he will.*

Secondly, Bread doth satisfie but one appetite namely, hunger; never was it known that bread could satisfie thirst, but now the Lord Jesus Christ he can satisfie all the desires of the Soul, and supply all the wants of the Soul, he is both the bread of life, and the water of life; nay, not only bread and water, but he is cloathing to the Soul; as it is in *Rom.* 13. *ult. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* So that he is both Food and Spiritual Cloathing.

Thirdly, Bread, though it satisfie your hunger for the present, yet it cannot so take away your hunger that you shall hunger no more; if it satisfie hunger to day, you will be hungry again to morrow. But now the Lord Jesus Christ doth so satisfie the hunger of our Souls, that we shall never hunger nor thirst more; for so the Text tells you, *He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

Fourthly, Corporal bread you know is perishing, and doth but nourish a perishing life, *John* 6. 27. *Labour not for the meat that perisheth.* But now the Lord Jesus Christ is not perishing bread, but that bread that endures for ever; and that life that he gives, is not a perishing life neither, *John* 6. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* So you see the Point opened. Let me briefly apply it, because I principally aim at the second part of the Text,

Text, the comfortable Inference. But for the improvement of this Poynt.

First, By way of *Information*; and then by way of *Exhortation*.

First, By way of *Information*, there are three Doctrinal Inferences from the Poynt thus opened, that may be thence deduced.

First, If the Lord Jesus Christ be that living bread that gives Spiritual and Eternal life to them that believe in him, then you may learn this Lesson, That such, and so great is the indispensable need that we have of the Lord Jesus Christ, that without him we are undone for ever. In the 53. *verse* of this excellent Chapter, *Verily, verily I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* He speaks there of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, in a spiritual manner. You know there are many desires of the Soul that may be dispenced with, but hunger is a desire that must be satisfied; unless you have bread for your sustenance, the body dyes, so unless you have Jesus Christ for your spiritual sustenance your souls dye, and drop down into Hell for ever; for look as the union of the Body with the Soul, is the life of the Body; so the union of the Soul with Jesus Christ, is the life of the Soul. O hearken to this, thou that art yet in a natural, and unregenerate estate, uncalled, unconverted, that never was yet transplanted from off the old rotten stock of *Adam*, and replanted into the true Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ; if thou livest in this estate, and dyest in this estate, thou art undone for ever, the poorest worm that crawls upon the ground, is in a better condition than thou art in.

Acts

Acts 26.27. *Believest thou the Prophets?* (said St. *Paul* to King *Agrippa*) *I know that thou believest.* Believest thou this Doctrine? say I to thee, that art yet uncalled, unconverted, I know thou believest it not, for, if thou didst believe it, thou couldest not rest contented in a Christless condition for one week, no, not for one day; but wouldest by prayers and tears, and supplications, cry out, *Lord Jesus give me thy self, whatever thou denyest me, give me thy self, though I be as poor as Job upon the Dunghil.* But we cannot perswade men that the danger of a natural estate and condition is so great as indeed it is; but the Lord convince you and perswade you of it.

A second Doctrinal Inference that may be hence deduced, is this, *If Jesus Christ be the living bread,* then it follows, the vanity and emptiness, and insufficiency of all Creature-accommodations, is exceeding great; name what you will of these outward accommodations that the world do so greedily gape after, whether Riches, or Honours, or Pleasures, or goodly brave buildings, this and that; alas we may say of them, they are not bread, *Isa.* 55. 2. *Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread?* Your money, that is, your precious opportunities, your time, that is your money to make your Markets for Eternity with, for Moments are the Markets of Eternity; *Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* Alas, alas these outward things they are neither satisfactory, nor permanent; they are not satisfactory, for *Solomon* tells us, that *He that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver, nor he that*

that loveth abundance, with encrease, Eccl. 5. 10. As soon may you hope to fill a Chest with wisdom and knowledge, as to fill a Soul, which is a spiritual substance, with temporal things. And as these outward things are not satisfactory, so neither are they permanent or lasting, 1 *Cor.* 6. 13. *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them.* Look as the belly devours the meat, so the worms at last shall devoure the belly, and so both meat and belly perish together. But if you can but once get this spiritual bread, the Lord Christ, you shall never perish. Alass, alass, consider your own folly and brutishnesse, in seeking for satisfaction here below, where none is to be found; your bread without Christ, is but gravel in your throats; your moral vertues without Christ, are but glittering sins; your bodyes without Christ, are but dust and ashes; dust that will drop down into the Grave, and ashes that are fitted for the Furnace of Hell fire; your souls without Christ, are but the Devils Palace; your lives without Christ, is but the service of sin; and your deaths without Christ, will be nothing else but the wages of sin. O who would rest then in a Christlesse condition! who would set down contented with these poor, transitory, shadowy comforts!

A third Lesson we may learn by way of Inference, is this, *If Jesus Christ be the living bread*, then our main end and errand in coming to the Lords Table, is not to feed the Body, but to feed the Soul, 1 *Cor.* 11. 21. *What have you not Houses to eat and to drink in?* saith the Apostle. So that it is not the end of your coming to the Lords Table, therefore you eat but a little piece of Bread,

Bread, and drink but a little draught of Wine, to put you in mind that it is not the Body that you come to feed, but you come to feed the Soul, and therefore you should labour to get a preparation suitable to that spiritual bread that you are to taste of; *But what is that?* you will say. I answer, There should be something done before your coming, and something done in the Administration of the Elements, and something done after the receiving of the Elements.

First, There should be something done before you come; O beg a blessing upon your spiritual bread; *Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*, Math. 4. 4. I may apply it thus, your Souls will not live by this Sacramental Bread, but by the Word of Gods blessing; If God will bless this spiritual food to you, your Souls shall live. O therefore beg the Blessing of God upon this Heavenly Bread.

Secondly, And then there is something to be done, while you are eating this Bread, you should get your hearts all on fire with love to this blessed Redeemer, that was contented to be made bread, to be prepared food, as I told you even now, to be threshed, and winnowed, and ground, and bak't, and scorch't in the Oven of his Fathers wrath; O how should your hearts be all on a flame with love, as the two Disciples were, going to *Emaus*, *As Jesus Christ brake bread and gave it to them, and opened to them the Scriptures, their hearts did burn within them*, (Luke 24. 32.) they were as it were all on a fire. So should it be with you when you come to the Lords Table, you should have your meditations

meditations wholly taken up with that which is the life of the Sacrament, even the death of our Saviour; let not your hearts be roaving, and wandring about, watch them narrowly; you will hardly keep them close to a duty two Minutes without great watching.

Thirdly, There is something to be done after, when you have eaten of this living bread, that is, to be exceeding thankful, study *to walk worthy of the Lord unto all wel-pleasing*. That's the first Use of *Information*.

The second *Use* is of *Exhortation*. *Is Jesus Christ that living bread that gives eternal life to all those that have a part and interest in him?* Then let my counsel be accepted with you, give no rest to your eyes, no satisfaction to your souls in any condition, with any portion or priviledge whatsoever, until you have gotten this bread, until you have gotten Jesus Christ to be your portion, to be the food of your souls. That which *Solomon* speaks of Wisdome, *Prov.* 4. 7. *Wisdome is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom, and with all thy gettings, get understanding*. So say I, this is the principal bread, therefore get Christ, and above all thy gettings, get Christ. But may be you will say, *How shall we get him?* I answer

First, You must highly prize him, esteeming all things but drosse in comparison of him, you must esteem all outward thing, but as dogs meat in compariton of that bread which is in your Fathers house.

Secondly, You must earnestly beg him, you must pray as the *Capernaites* did, *Lord, evermore give us this bread*, vers. 34. of this Chapter.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, You must labour for him; *Labour not for that meat that perisheth, but for that bread that endures to eternal life*, John 6. 27. *But how must we labour for him?* You must labour for him in the use of his Ordinances, as Praying, Reading, Hearing, Communicating at the Lords Table, and the like.

Fourthly, When you have found him, or know where this bread is to be had, you must hunger and thirst for him, for the Lord Christ will never bestow himself upon that soul that doth not breath and break with longing desires for him.

Fifthly, You must be sure by Faith to apply him to your own souls. Bread, when it stands upon the Table, is common bread; but when I have eaten it, then it is my bread, then it turns to my nourishment, to my substance; so you must make Application of Christ to your souls.

Sixthly, If you would have Christ, you must learn to live upon him. As a man lives upon bread, so you must live upon Christ; live upon him in poynt of Justification, in poynt of Sanctification and Salvation. *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me*, vers. 57. of this Chapter. If you live in him, and live upon him, you shall hereafter for ever live with him. And so much of the first Branch of the Text, the evident Proposition.

I come now to the comfortable Inference that is thence deduced, *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst.* By coming to Christ, is meant believing in Christ; for the latter Phrase doth expound the former. *He that cometh to me*, that is, he that believes

believes in me. Coming, you know, is a motion, and in a motion there are two termes, there is the *terminus a quo*, and *terminus ad quem*, something a man comes from, and something a man comes to; so believing is a motion of the Soul, a man comes from himself, from his own righteousnesse, from his own ends, he comes from the world, and then he comes to Christ, he comes to him, as one that is able to give him fit and full satisfaction to his soul; *He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes in me shall never thirst.* Christ speaks here of a spiritual hunger, and of a spiritual thirst; the meaning is this, He that believes in me, saith our Saviour, he shall have all his wants supplyed, all his desires allayed, and he shall have his Soul fully satisfied. So then the Doctrine I shall give you from this second Branch of the Text, is this,

Doct. *Whosoever believes in Jesus Christ shall by Christ have all his spiritual wants supplyed, and all his desires allayed, and his soul fully satisfied.*

Why is Jesus Christ not only compared to bread, but also to water? *Isa.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters of life.* By water is meant Jesus Christ. Why is he compared not to water, but to Wine and Milk, *Come buy Wine and Milk, without Money, and without Price*, but only to shew that he is able to give the Soul fit and full satisfaction? Here are two Queries I shall speak to by way of Explication.

First, *How, or in what sense this Doctrine is true,*

He that believes in Christ shall have all his desires satisfied?

Secondly, *How it comes to passe, or what is the reason, that such a soul as believes in Christ shall have the spiritual desires of his soul satisfied?*

First, *How, or in what sense this Doctrine holds true, That he that believes in Christ, shall by Christ have all his desires answered?*

In answer to this, you must know the desires of the Soul are of three sorts; there are sinful desires, and sensual desires, and spiritual desires.

First, There are sinful desires of the Soul; there is no man but naturally he doth as eagerly desire to sin, as he desires to eat when he is hungry, *Pro.* 4. 17. *They eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the Wine of violence.* Naturally a man hath a Dog-like thirst after sin, some after one lust, some after another. *Do you think the Scripture saith in vain, the spirit that is in us lusteth to envy?* Jam. 4. 5. That which is here spoken of envy may be spoken of any other sin. Some lust after covetousnesse, some lust after pride, some after envy, some after one thing, some after another. But mark now, as soon as the soul comes to Jesus Christ, and believes in him, these desires and sinful lusts shall be quenched, because the Lord Jesus Christ will make such a soul to be dead to sin: A dead man desireth nothing. I know my Brethren, that this is to be understood in part, because our mortification is imperfect, therefore all the sinful desires of the Soul will not be quenched in this life. But thus far it holds true, *He that is born of God sinneth not*, 1 John 3. 9. that is so far forth as a man is born of God, he sinneth not; there is a nature

ture in him, that sinneth not, a Divine Nature, for he is made partaker of the Divine Nature; there is something in him that doth not sin, that doth not lust after sin, but lusteth against sin, he hath something in him that doth not sin. *As the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so the Spirit lusteth against the Flesh*, Gal. 5. 17. These sensual desires shall be quenched.

Secondly, There are sensual desires, that is, a lusting after the lawful contentments of this life. Some lust after one dish of the world, and some after another. *Zachens*, a joining Publican, he lusted after the gain of the world, I, but when he comes to Christ, this lustful desire of his is allayed; for said he, *Lord, now half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have done wrong, I will make recompence fourfold.* Here is an admirable example for some to follow, that make haste to be rich, as *Solomon* hath it, *He that makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent*, Prov. 28. 20. Such a one had need to think of restitution. So the Disciples in the Primitive time, they *sold their possessions, and brought them, and laid them down at the Apostles feet*, Acts 4. 35. Why at the Apostles feet? because they regarded their outward possessions (in comparison of Heavenly treasure, which they were made partakers of) no more than the dirt under their feet. St. *Paul* at the first was taken with the world, it was as a fine Nosegay to him; but afterwards, when he was crucified to the world, and the world to him, he look't upon it but as a withered Flower.

Thirdly, There are some spiritual desires of the Soul, and these shall be satisfied, those thirsts

after grace shall be satisfied; so that a man that once believes in Jesus Christ, shall no more thirst for grace; no more thirst for grace, may some say, why none thirst so much for grace, as they that have grace. It is true, and yet I shall make my words good, he shall not thirst for grace in two senses or respects.

First, He shall not have a total and painful thirst after grace. There is a twofold thirsting, as Divines well observe, after grace.—There is a thirst arising from a total want of grace; this is a painful and deadly thirst, now this thirst for grace shall be quite quenched.—And then there is a thirst arising from a sense of the imperfection of the grace we have, and this thirst, it is true, shall never be fully satisfied untill we come to Heaven; but the painful thirst that shall be taken away; so saith our Saviour, *John* 4. 14. *Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of water springing up into everlasting life.* Such a one shall never have a painful thirst more.

Secondly, A man that believes in Jesus Christ, shall not have a hopelesse, and helplesse thirst; although he may be thirsting after grace still, yet it is not a hopelesse thirst, because he hath a Spring and Store-house to go to for satisfaction; *What is that Spring and Store-house?* I answer, there is a double Spring or Store-house.

First, The Lord Jesus Christ himself, he is the Fountain of living water, and he is that Spring that refresheth the Soul; *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulnesse dwel*, Col. 1. 19.

Secondly,

Secondly, The precious Promises, they are another Spring for the Souls satisfaction. O what refreshing doth often flow into the Soul, from those rich and precious Promises!

But it may be you will say to me, *When shall a Believer thus have all his desires satisfied, his sinful desires quenched, his sensual desires allayed, and his spiritual desires after grace satisfied?*

I answer, partly in this life, and partly in the life to come.—Partly in this life, his desires shall be satisfied, he shall have a fulnesse suitable to his condition while he lives upon the Earth; as a child hath strength suitable to a child, so a Believer shall have a fulnesse suitable to his condition. The Prophet *David* cryes out, *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatnesse*, Psal. 63. 5. This was a suitable fulnesse.—But then in the life to come, there shall be a perfect and compleat satisfaction given in to the Soul; then shall this Scripture be fulfilled, *In thy presence is fulness of Joy, and at thy right hand are Pleasures for evermore*, Psal. 16. 11. And saith he in *Psal.* 17. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousnesse; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likenesse.* In that one verse you have a picture of Heaven, which consists in Vision of God, *I will behold thy face in righteousnesse*: in Conformity to God, *When I awake with thy likenesse*; in Satisfaction in God, *I shall be satisfied.* Vision of God, Conformity to God, and Satisfaction in God, this makes up Heaven. And that is a most precious Scripture, *Math.* 25. 23. *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* It is as if our Saviour should say, This Joy cannot enter into thee because of thy straitnesse, but thou mayest enter

into it because of its largeneſſe. The Sea cannot enter into a Hogs-head, because it is a Veſſel that cannot contain it; but the Hogs-head may enter into the Sea, because the Sea can fill it. Every gaping deſire of the Soul ſhall then be ſatisfied with as much Grace and Glory, and Holineſſe, and Happineſſe, as it can be capable of receiving; every Veſſel ſhall then be filled according to its capacity. A Pint, it is true, doth not contain ſo much as a Pottle, but the Pint ſhall be filled as well as the Pottle.

Secondly, *But how comes this to paſſe, that a Believer ſhall have all his deſires ſatisfied?* I ſhall give you but two Reaſons for it.

First, Becauſe Faith makes Jeſus Chriſt a mans own; it is the eſpouſing Grace, it is the Wedding Ring that makes up the Match between Chriſt and the Soul. If *Thomas* do but put his finger into his Saviours ſide, O ſaith he, *My Lord, and my God*, now he ſaith, Lord Jeſus thou art mine. The woman as ſoon as ſhe is married to her Husband, is partaker of an intereſt in all his Goods; *With all my worldly Goods I thee endow.* Thus the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as ſoon as by Faith he is made ours, all his is made ours, *He is made of God to us, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſſe, Sanctification, and Redemption.*

Secondly, Faith as it makes Jeſus Chriſt ours, ſo by making him ours, it makes God the Father to be ours alſo; Faith makes God our Father to be our Husband, *Iſa.* 54. 5. *For thy Maker is thine Husband*; It makes God our Father to be our Friend, our Portion, our Shield, our Rock, our Refuge, our Redeemer, our All. Now when Faith hath made Chriſt to be ours, and by Chriſt hath made

made God to be ours, then we may say, All is ours. A man that hath the Sea, cannot want water; he that hath the Sun, cannot want light; he that hath a Golden Mine cannot want treasure: So he that hath gotten Jesus Christ to be his Portion, he hath all that his heart can desire, he shall have all his Soul wants satisfied.

Now briefly to make Application, and there are but two Uses I shall speak unto.

First, By way of Consolation, because that is the proper Use of this Doctrine, and therefore I put it in the first place. Art thou one that art a true Believer? Hast thou cast thy Soul into the arms of Jesus Christ? Hast thou received Jesus Christ? that is, Hast thou believed in him? Hast thou received him in all his Offices, as King, as Priest, as Prophet? Art thou as willing to be Ruled by him, as to be Redeemed by him? Hast thou got Jesus Christ, not only by outward profession, (so all of you have that hear me this day) but hast thou got Christ by inward possession, so that Christ is thine? O lift up thy head with joy! O know assuredly, that all thy sinful desires shall by little and little be quenched, though God do leave some corruptions in thee, to conflict with, and to teach thee to prize the Righteousnesse of Jesus Christ at a high rate, yet all these sinful desires shall by little and little be mortified; and all thy spiritual desires fully satisfied, though not perfectly in this world, yet when thou comest to enjoy him in Glory; but yet here in this life, thou shalt have so much satisfaction, that thou mayest say with the Prophet *David, My Soul is satisfied as with Marrow and Fatnesse.* And all thy sensual desires shall be allayed: though

it may be thou hast but a poor pittance of these outward things; for God sees it fit many times that his best and soundest Sheep should be kept on the shortest Commons; although this be true, that thou hast but a small pittance of these outward things; thou wantest riches and honours, and outward accommodations, which are so much admired, yet thou mayest say with the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. *As having nothing, and yet possessing all things*; Though I have nothing, yet I possesse all things; how? really I possesse all things, I have all things in *Capite*, in Christ my Head, and really by Faith: O what comfort is this!

Secondly, I might in the second place make this a Touch-stone of tryal to discover to you whether you be true Believers, or no. Are thy desires after the world allayed, that now thou canst say with St. *Paul*, *I have learned in every state therewith to be content*? Hast thou not a painful thirst arising from the guilt of a self-accusing Conscience, as thou hadst heretofore? then it is a token that thy Faith is a true Faith; and by this thou mayest know whether thou art a weak Believer, or a strong Believer; for according to the measure of your satisfaction in these things, so you may know the measure of your Faith. If thy Soul hath large satisfaction, then thou art a strong Believer; but if thy Soul hath but little satisfaction, then thou art but a weak Believer.

But to close all with a word of Exhortation, and the Exhortation is to two sorts briefly:

First, To those that are not Believers.

Secondly, To those that are true Believers.

First,

First, To those that are not Believers; and my Exhortation to them, is this, O you that have not yet closed with Jesus Christ, you that have not yet seen so much beauty in him as to prize him, and insatiably to desire him, O that now you would begin to close with him: you that have not been perswaded by all former Exhortations and Invitations of Ministers heretofore, be perswaded now, O come, come to Jesus Christ, come to the water of life, *Come buy Wine, and Milk, without money, and without price*, come to this bread of life; thou mayest come as freely to Jesus Christ, O sinner, who ever thou art, as the wounded *Israelites* might come to the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness: O consider what satisfaction is to be found in him! Run through all the courses in the world, run through all conditions in the world, run through all the delights of the sons of men, and see whether they can give you satisfaction, yea or no. Can sin give you satisfaction? Truly the satisfaction which sin gives, I will tell you what it is like, it is just like the sprinkling of water upon the Smiths Forge, that makes the fire to burn so much the hotter; or like the pouring of Oyl upon a flame, that makes it flame so much the fiercer; this is the satisfaction that you have by sin. Or can the world give you satisfaction? Alas, the world deals with you just as *Absaloms* Mule did with him, leaving his master hanging in the Oak, when he had most need of her; so when you have most need of comfort and relief, worldly riches and profits they leave you in a day of wrath. Can any of these give you satisfaction? *Prov.* 11. 4. *They profit not in a day of wrath.* Can any of these outward things give you satisfaction?

ction? Alas, the Soul of man hath a kind of infiniteness of desires in it, therefore nothing can give the Soul satisfaction, but the infinite mercy of a Gracious God, and the infinite merits of a Blessed Redeemer, and the infinite Comforts of the Holy Ghost. As long as you live without Christ, never look for satisfaction, look for no satisfaction from the things of this life, *Isa.* 65. 13. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, my Servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my Servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my Servants shall rejoyce, but ye shall be ashamed.* Look for no satisfaction from temporal things. And I am sure in Hell there will be no satisfaction for you; for there you will be always thirsting, thirsting with a painful and tormenting thirst. *Dives*, although he had never so much wealth to tumble himself up and down in here while he lived, yet when he came to Hell (though perhaps he might, by some flattering Preacher in a Funeral Sermon, be lodged in *Abrahams* bosom, yet when he came to Hell) he had not a drop of water to cool his tongue. There is no satisfaction to be had in any enjoyment, nor in any condition, or place, until we come to Jesus Christ, and then we shall hunger no more, nor thirst no more, then all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and sorrow and grief from our hearts.

My second Exhortation is to true Believers. O labour for further degrees of Faith; according to your measure of Faith, such will your fulnesse and satisfaction be, (*Psal.* 81. 10.) O could you open your mouths wide, that is, could the desires of your Souls this day be widened and enlarged, they should all of them be filled; open thy mouth never

never so wide, and God will fill it. O do not content your selves with a small measure of Faith, but labour for a strong and great Faith; according to your Buckets, so shall your waters be drawn; *Draw water out of the Wells of Salvation*, Isa. 12. 3. What are the Wells of Salvation, but God and Jesus Christ, and his Spirit, and the Graces of the Spirit, and the Ordinances of God? These are the Wells of Salvation. If you bring but little Buckets, you will get but little water; if you bring large Buckets, you will get a large deal of water. If you bring but little Faith, you will receive but little from Christ; but if you bring a strong Faith, a large and strong Bucket, O how much refreshing and Soul-satisfaction might you receive! There are three benefits which you shall have by a strong Faith.

First, Faith hath this Property, it makes whatever it toucheth its own; *According to thy Faith be it unto thee*, Math. 18. 13. So if thy Faith do but touch Jesus Christ, it will make him yours; if it do but touch the Promises, it makes them yours. The truth is, there hath been a great deal of talk of the Philosophers stone, but I know no other Philosophers stone, but Faith, and this turns all it toucheth into Gold: Blessed is the man that by Faith can touch Jesus Christ; no man ever touch him by Faith, but was healed by Grace.

Secondly, You shall have this benefit, it will yield you abundance of joy and satisfaction in the expectation of your desires, before you come to the fruition of your desires. You read of *the Joy of Faith*, Phil. 1. 25. And the Apostle prays for the *Romans*, that their hearts *may be filled with joy and*

peace

peace in believing, Rom. 15. 13. When *Hannah* had once poured out her Soul before God, now her heart was quieted by Faith, as if she had enjoyed her desires for the present, *She went away, and did eat, and her Countenance was no more sad*, 1 Sam. 1.

Thirdly, Faith will reallize all the Promises, *Heb.* 11. 1. *It is the substance of things hoped for*; it makes things that are absent, present, that are afar off to be neer at hand, it will bring you to Heaven, before you come to Heaven; O what a precious grace is Faith! And this is the grace you will most stand in need of, in your approaches to the Lords Table. Now the Lord strengthen this hand of Faith, that by it we may make vigorous Applications of the blood of Jesus Christ to our poor Souls, who is the living bread that is able to give fit and full satisfaction to our Souls, who is that living water, whereof whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more.

Christ's

Christ's True Disciples, ARE Doers of Gods Will.

John 7. 17.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.

THese words are the words of our Saviour, uttered at that great feast, the feast of Tabernacles; the occasion of these words, was this, The *Jews* marvelled at our Saviour, as you may read *vers.* 15. *How knoweth this man Letters, having never learned?* That is, how comes he to be so skilful in the Scriptures, seeing he was never taught by man? Our Blessed Saviour to this Query answers two things.

First, He tells them in the foregoing verse, the

the 16th *verse*, that his Doctrine was not his own, but was taught him of the Father.

Secondly, He shews them an excellent way or means, whereby they may discern truth from falshood, true Doctrine from corrupt Doctrine, namely, by obedience to the will of God, for, *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* So then in the Text, you may take notice of two particulars.

First, An Invitation to a duty.

Secondly, An Encouragement to that duty.

First, An Invitation to a duty, in these words, *If any man will do his will*, that is, that will do the will of God my Father.

Secondly, The Encouragement to it, in these words, *He shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self*; that is, he shall know which is true Doctrine, and which is false, which is the Doctrine according to God and Godlinesse, or what is spoken for popular applause, and spoke of a mans own head. And according to these two parts of the Text, there are these two Doctrines that may be raised from the words.

Doct. 1. *That the true Disciples of Christ are Doers of the will of God.*

Doct. 2. *That they that do the will of God, shall know more of it, and shall be more confirmed in their knowledge.*

I begin with the first, *That the true Disciples of Christ, or true Christians, are such as are Doers of the will of God.* For the proof of this Doctrine, take

take two or three places of Scripture. *Mat.* 7. 21. *Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdome of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* A true Child of God, a true Professor of the Gospel, is described by this, he is a Doer of the will of God, *Rom.* 2. 13. *For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified*, that is, shall be owned and accepted of God the Father. So *James* 1. 22. *But be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own souls*, cozening your selves with false Syllogismes, as the word παραλογιζόμενοι there signifies. If a man be a Hearer of the word only, and not a Doer of it, he cozens himself with false Arguments: And the like you have in the 25. *verse* of the same Chapter, *But whoso looketh into the perfect Law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful Hearer, but a Doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed*, that man is a blessed Disciple of Jesus Christ. But for the better Explication of this Poynt, there are three things I shall open to you.

First, *What is meant by the will of God?*

Secondly, *How the will of God must be done by those that are the Disciples of Christ?*

Thirdly, *Why the Disciples of Christ must be Doers of the will of God?*

First, *What the will of God is?* Not to trouble you with the various distinctions of the Schoolmen, briefly, there is a twofold will of God mentioned in Scripture; the one is called a *Secret will*, the other is called *a Revealed will*; you have them both mentioned in one verse, *Deut.* 29. 29. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but*

those

those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Law. Now our Saviour speaks here in the Text, of the Revealed will of God, and it is called a *Revealed will*, because it is made known to us in three Books;

In the { Book of Nature. / Book of the Creature. / Book of the Scripture.

First, The will of God is made known unto us partly in the Book of Nature. Thus many of the better sort of Heathens, that had nothing but the light of Nature, by the dictates of their own Consciences, knew what the will of God was, as appears by that *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. *For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law to themselves, which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conscience also bearing witnesse, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.* Mark, the *Gentiles* which had not the Law, that is, they had not the Law of Scripture, yet did by Nature the things contained in the Law. The *Gentiles* which had not the Law of the Scripture, yet by the Law of Nature did those things that were agreeable to the will of God, and by the dictates of their own Consciences, did some things that were agreeable to the will of God; and although this light of Nature was not sufficient to bring them to Heaven, yet it was sufficient to leave them without excuse.

Secondly,

Secondly, This will of God is revealed in the Book of the Creature, *viz.* by the works of Gods Creation and Providence, as the Apostle tells us, *Rom.* 1. 20. *For the invisible things of him, from the Creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head; so that they are without excuse.* So that the light a man may have by Gods works in the Creation, and by his works of Providence, which the Heathen had, this Book of the Creature; is enough to leave him without excuse; much of Gods will may be read in this Book.

Thirdly, It is called *a revealed will*, because it is made known to us in the Book of the Scripture; of this speaks the Apostle, *Heb.* 13. 21. Saith he, make you perfect, he prayes that *God would make them perfect in every good work to do his will*, that is, his will revealed in the Word of God, for there doth the will of God most clearly appear; therefore when our Saviour saith here in the Text, *He that doth his will*, that is, he that obeys his Word, and he that makes the Word of God to be the Rule of his walking, *Gal.* 6. 16. *To as many as walk according to this Rule, peace be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.* The Word of God, that is the Rule we should walk by; this is the Pattern or Prescript of Gods revealed will. That's the first Particular.

Secondly, It may be demanded, *How, or in what manner must the will of God be done?*

For answer to this, for the right manner of doing the will of God, there are these seven things required.

First, The will of God must be done knowingly. *Solomon* saith expressly, *Prov.* 19. 2. *Also that the Soul be without knowledge, it is not good.* All the Services that a man doth, either out of Will-Worship, or out of blind devotion, it is but like the cutting off of a Dogs neck, as the Prophet speaks, *Isa.* 66. 3. And therefore the Apostle bids the *Romans first to prove, and know, what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God*, Rom. 12. 2.

Secondly, The will of God must be done believingly: *By Faith*, it is said, that *Abel offered unto God a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain*, Heb. 11. 4. It may be *Cain* offered the very same Sacrifice, that *Abel* did, yet *Abels* was accepted, and *Cains* was rejected, because *Abel* offered in Faith, and *Cain* did not, *For without Faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. 11. 6. You cannot do the will of God without Faith; because it is Faith that brings Jesus Christ in its armes, and so makes both our Persons and Prayers accepted: *No man can come to the Father, but by me*, saith our Saviour, *John* 14. 6. And we are said to *offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God*, (how?) *by Jesus Christ*; they are acceptable onely by Christ, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. Therefore a man must do the will of God believingly.

Thirdly, The will of God must be done graciously, from a principle of grace, from that which is called an inward principle, as the Apostle shews expressly, *Circumcision avails nothing*; no outward priviledge can make us acceptable with God, but a new Creature, *Gal.* 6. 15. *The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*, Rom. 8. 7, 8. A man

that

that is not yet in the ſtate of grace, cannot do the will of God acceptably; the will of God muſt be done graciouſly, from a gracious principle.

Fourthly, The will of God muſt be done cordially, it muſt be done with the heart, *Prov.* 23. 26. *My Son, give me thy heart.* What is not done with the heart, God reckons as not done at all; therefore the firſt and great Commandement is this, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy ſoul, with all thy ſtrength, and whatever ye do in word or deed, do it heartily, as to the Lord,* Col. 3. 16, 17. And the Apoſtle exciting Servants, he bids them *Obey their Maſters, not with eye-ſervice, but as doing the will of God from the heart,* Eph. 6. 6.

Fifthly, The will of God muſt be done ſincerely, without any ſiniſter or ſelf-reſpect; a man muſt have upright ends and aimes in doing the will of God; for God looks at our aimes, as well as at our actions, 2 *Kings* 10. *Jehu* did the will of God in deſtroying the Worſhippers of *Baal*, and deſtroying the Children of *Ahab*, God commended *Jehu* for doing his will, but yet notwithſtanding, becauſe he aimed at the ſetling of himſelf in the Kingdom, more than ſeeking the glory of God; therefore God looked upon it but as murther, and ſaid he *would avenge the blood of Jezerel, on the houſe of Jehu*, Hoſea 1. A man may do that thing that God would have him do, and yet be puniſhed for the doing of it, if his aims and ends be not upright. *Whatever you do, whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. The *Phariſees* faſted and prayed, but it was for vain-glory, and it was but to cloak their

wickednesse and iniquity, by a fair colour, or pretence of piety; they made long Prayers, and in the mean time devoured Widows houses, *Math.* 23. 14.

Sixthly, The will of God must be done fully, *Numb.* 14. 24. *And my Servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the Land.*

But may be you will say, *When doth a man do the will of God fully, or follow God fully?* I answer,

First, When he doth not do it with a divided heart, *Hosea* 10. 2. *Their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty.* When a mans heart is divided, partly for God, and partly for the world, then he doth not follow God fully.

Secondly, Then a man follows God fully, when he hath respect to every Command of God, as well as to one Command, *Psal.* 119. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy Commandements.*

Thirdly, When he doth not retain any one sin, in the love, liking, and approbation of it, but he *hates every false way*, Psal. 119. 104. You read that God was weary of their New Moons, and their Solemn Feasts, *My Soul hates them*, saith God, *Isa.* 1. 14. Yet these New Moons, and Solemn Feasts, were of Gods own institution and appointment; But why doth God hate them then? the Reason is this, saith God, *Because your hands are full of blood*, full of cruelty, and oppression, *vers.* 15. Therefore they do not do the will of God fully, that retain the love of sin in their hearts, and this makes their Services rejected.

Seaventhly, The will of God must be done constantly,

ſtantly, *Pſal.* 119. 20. *My Soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy Judgements, at all times.* So here, a man muſt have reſpect unto the will of God at all times; but there are three times eſpecially, wherein God calls us to do his will.

Firſt, In a time of proſperity, when the world with the luſts and vanity of it, are ready to draw away our hearts to it; O then have a care to do Gods will, *Deut.* 6. 11, 12. *When thou haſt eaten and art full,* (when thou art in a proſperous condition) *then beware leaſt thou forget the Lord which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt,* &c. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* had learnt a great Leſſon, when he ſaid, *I have learnt in whatſoever ſtate I am in, therewith to be content: I know how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound,* Phil. 4. 11, 12. There is more danger in proſperity, than in adverſity. As in a croud, a man is in danger to loſe his Purſe; ſo in a croud of worldly buſineſſes and proſperity, a man is in the greateſt danger to loſe his God.

Secondly, In a time of danger, then God calls you to do his will, that you ſhould not decline duty for danger ſake, that you ſhould not break a Hedge, to miſs a foul way. See a ſingular example of this in *Daniel,* when he knew the doing of his duty would be the hazard of his life, when he knew the writing was ſealed, and that ſnares were laid for his life, yet he would not omit duty for the ſaving of his life; he prayed three times a day, as he was wont to do, his Window being open in his Chamber towards *Jeruſalem,* Dan. 6. 10. So thoſe three noble Worthies, who were ſo highly honoured by God, as to be miraculouſly

preserved, they would not decline duty for dangers sake; *Be it known unto thee O King, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from this burning Furnace, but if not, we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship thy Golden Image which thou hast set up,* Dan. 3. 17, 18. So singular was the courage of St. *Peter*, and St. *John*, *Acts* 4. 20. *We cannot but speak the things that we have seen, and heard*; Threaten, or not threaten, imprison, or not imprison, we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.

Thirdly, A third season when God calls us to do his will, is this, when he puts an opportunity into our hands of doing some special piece of service for him; now is a price put into our hands, now a man should do the will of God especially. This is that which *Mordecai* told *Esther*, *Esther* 4. *Who knows whether thou art come to the Kingdome, for such a time as this?* It is as if he should say, It may be God hath put an opportunity into thy hand, to help his Church at this time.

The third thing by way of Explication, is this, *But why must the Disciples of Christ, be Doers of Gods will?* The Reasons are these.

First, Because the whole Body of Religion, (as I may say) consists in these two things, namely, in Believing and Obeying; take away one of these, and Religion is a lame Religion.

Secondly, By doing the will of our Father, we shew our selves to be Disciples of Christ indeed, because we now imitate our Lord and Master, for thus did he; see that remarkable Scripture, *John* 6. 38. *I came from Heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Because if we do not do the will of God, we shall certainly do the will of a worse Master; if we do not work in Gods service, we shall do the Devils drudgery; if we be not workers of righteousnesse, we shall be workers of iniquity; as appears by that in *Mat.* 7. 21, 23. *He that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdome of Heaven*: compare it with *vers.* 23. *And then will I say unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* It is as if our Saviour should say, Because you would not be workers of righteousnes, to do the will of my Father, therefore it is that you are workers of iniquity.

Fourthly, Christians must do the will of God, because this is that which makes for the honour of God, *John* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.* Look as by believing, we give honour to the Truth of God; so by obeying, we give God the honour of his Soveraignty. *As obedient Children, we should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darknesse, into his marvelous light,* 1 Pet. 2. 9.

Before I come to the Application, there are two or three Objections that lye in the way, which I shall endeavour to remove.

Object. 1. It may be some will say, *You do so cry up duty, and doing the will of God, that you infringe or eclipse the free-grace of God; this is not Preaching free-grace.*

Answ. I answer, This is not an infringing, or an eclipsing of the free-grace of God, because you must know, Faith and Good Works are not opposite one to another, but they are subordinate, they

are consistent, and may stand one with another very well.

Secondly, I answer; The grace of God doth not exclude all works, but it excludes those works only that are meritorious; Good works therefore (we may truly say) are Causes, without which we cannot be saved; though they are not Efficient Causes, nor instrumental Causes, yet they are Causes without which we cannot be saved. As the Apostle saith, *Without holinesse no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. So may I say here, Though we be not saved for our good works, yet we shall never be saved without good works. I would have you to remember this, Good works, though they are not necessary to our Justification, yet they are necessary to our Salvation; there is a great deal of difference between these two, to be saved by faith, and saved for faith; this is certain, we are not saved for our faith, this is the errour of the *Socinians*, that say, The Art of believing is our righteousnesse. Though we are not saved for faith, yet the Apostle saith, *We are saved by faith*: So here, we are not saved for our good works, yet we are not saved without good works, as the Apostle saith, *He that is a Doer of the Word, shall be blessed in his deed*, James 1. 25. He doth not say for his deed; so you may be blessed in your good works, though not for your good works.

Thirdly, I answer; Although faith alone doth justifie, yet that faith that is alone doth not justifie; though no man is justified for his works, yet that faith that is a justifying faith, is a working faith.

Secondly,

Secondly, It may be objected; *But why do you presse us to do the will of God, when of our selves we are not able to do it; we cannot of our selves think a good thought, nor speak a good word, much lesse do the will of God in that manner, as you have laid down how it must be done?*

To this I answer; Our inability doth not nullifie, or make void the Commands of God: God (for example) bids you believe, 1 *John* 3. 23. *And this is his Commandement, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*; and yet *Faith it is the gift of God*, Eph. 2. 8. and you cannot of your selves believe. So St. *Peter*, he bid *Simon Magus* pray, *that his sins may be forgiven him*; and yet notwithstanding, no man is able of himself to pray in an acceptable manner; saith the Apostle, *We know not how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit helps our infirmities*, Rom. 8. 66. But the *Arminians* they stretch the Objection yet a little further, and argue thus,

Object. *If God commands us to do what we are not able to perform, then this is cruelty in God*; and they give you an instance, *For example*, (say they) *If you tye a mans hands and bid him work, or cut off his legs and bid him walk, this is a great deal of cruelty*; so say they, *If God bid us do his will, and we have no freedome nor ability to do his will, then this is cruelty in God.*

To this I answer; It is true indeed, if God should tye our hands, or cut off our legs, then this Objection would be of some weight; but God doth not do so, God at first *made man upright*, he gave us ability to do his will; but if we have lost that ability, we cannot blame God, but our selves,

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our destruction is from our selves, our inability to do duty, is from our selves.

Secondly, I answer; Natural and unregenerate men, though they cannot work grace in their own hearts, yet they may do something in a tendency to grace, they may wait on the means of grace, they may hear as they are able, and pray as they are able, and do duties as they are able; they may wait upon God, as they did in *Acts* 2. when they cryed out, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* (1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.) They may come to the Assemblies of Gods Saints, as that ignorant and unbeliever did, though for the present he was in a state of ignorance and unbelief, yet by hearing the Word preached, he was convinced and converted. Men are not damned for Can-nots, but for Will-nots; men are not damned because they can do no better, but because they will do no better.

Thirdly, I answer; Though we do not work with God, yet God will not work without us; God saves no man against his will, God carries no man to Heaven as a Sack is carried to the Market, on Horse-back, but God saves a man by bowing and bending his will, and of unwilling, making him willing. St. *Austin* saith, *Qui sine auxilio tuo te Creavit, contra voluntatem tuam te non salvabit*; He that made thee without thee, will not save thee without thee.

Fourthly, I answer this Objection of the *Arminians* thus; When our Saviour saith, *He that doth the will of my Father, he shall know of the Doctrine*; and he supposeth that such a man hath grace in his heart, that doth enable him to do the will of God. Though it is true, an unregenerate man hath no free-

freedom of will to do good, yet this is a certain truth, that the regenerate, so far as they are regenerate, have freedome of will to do good.

Now for the Use and Application of this Point, briefly.

First, By way of Information. If *the Disciples of Christ are, or should be Doers of Gods will*, then it follows, he that would be a true Disciple of Christ, must be a self-denying Christian; it was that I proved to you at large in many Sermons, upon *Luke* 9.23. He that will be a true Christian, must be a self-denyer; but why so? it appears plainly: If the Disciples of Christ must be Doers of Gods will, then

First, He must not do his own will, but he must deny himself in that, he must not walk in his own way, he must not live by his own rule, he must not prosecute his own ends, but he must do all according to the will of his Lord and Master.

Secondly, If he must do Gods will, then he must not fulfill the wills of the flesh, and of the mind, *Eph.* 2. 3. *They that are Christs* Disciples, *have crucified the flesh, together with the affections and lusts of it*, Gal. 5. 24.

Thirdly, If he must do Gods will, then he must not do the will of men, he must not seek to please men, *Gal.* 1. 10. *Or do I seek to please men, for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.*

Fourthly, If he must make the will of God his Rule, then he must not make Providence his Rule, nor the impulse of the Spirit, as they are usually called.

First, He must not make Providence his Rule, 1 *Sam.* 26. 7, 8, 9. *David*, he had opportunity of

of killing *Saul*, who was his deadly enemy; *Saul* was now asleep in the Cave, he might have said, Surely here is the Providence of God, he hath put my enemy into my hand; but *David* would not make Providence his Rule, because he had not a Warrant from the Word of God to do any such thing. I would have you to remember this Rule; To follow Providence without the Word is dangerous, to follow it against the Word is damnable, but to follow Providence with the Word, that is safe and warrantable. —— Neither must the impulse of the Spirit be the Rule of your walking. *David* had so strong impulse on his Spirit to destroy *Nabal* and his Family, for his churlishness to his Souldiers, being in distresse, because he would not spare them necessaries, when he sent unto him, that he said, *God do so to me, and more also, if I leave any of Nabals Family, and not cut off all that pisseth against the Wall*, 1 Sam. 25. But upon the good counsel of *Abigail*, *Nabals* Wife, he recollected himself, and saw that it was not the will of God that he should do so, but he blessed God that he had diverted him from his purpose.

Secondly, Learn another Lesson by way of Inference, and that is this, The life of true Religion consists not in saying, but in doing; it consists not in profession, but in practice: When a man hath the Word of life in his mouth, and the life of the Word in his Conversation, then he is a Christian indeed. It's not the talking, but the walking Christian, not he that talks of the way to Heaven, and that talks of Christianity, but he that walks in the way that leads to Eternal life: This will prove you to be Christians of a right stamp.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Learn this Leſſon, That the will of God is the perfect Rule of Righteouſneſſe. A thing is therefore good becauſe God wills it, for God cannot will any thing that is not good; all his wayes are equal, though our wayes are unequal; all his paths are righteouſneſſe; therefore whatever God commands, it muſt therefore needs be good, becauſe he wills it.

Fourthly, Learn this Leſſon: If Chriſtians muſt be Doers of Gods will, then it follows, that whoſoever is proud, ſtubborn, and diſobedient, willingly reſiſting the Commands of God, ſuch certainly cannot be the Diſciples of Chriſt; they that fulfill their own wills, and they that walk in their own wayes, and after their own wills, and after the imaginations of their own hearts, and they that fulfill the luſts of the fleſh, and of the eye, thoſe are no Diſciples of Chriſt, for the Diſciples of Chriſt are Doers of the will of God. O hear, and fear all you voluptuous ones, that deny your own hearts nothing; as it was ſaid of *Adoniah*, *David denyed him nothing*. You that pamper the fleſh, and you that ſtudy more to pleaſe men, than to pleaſe the great God of Heaven and Earth, know aſſuredly, for the preſent you are no true Chriſtians, no Diſciples of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

A ſecond Uſe it is by way of Examination. (If time would give leave I might preſs this Uſe home upon you.) You may call your ſelves to account, whether you be in the number of thoſe that do the will of God, or no, whether you do it in a right manner, whether you do it knowingly; there is a great deal of knowledge, and yet there is but a little knowledge; there is a great deal of confuſed know-

knowledge, but there is but little sound, savoury, experimental, distinct knowledge of God. Do you do the will of God believingly? There is much talking of the grace of Faith, but little living the life of Faith.—Do you do the will of God graciously, from a principle of grace? it is one thing for a Jack or Clock that hath a constrained motion to go, and another thing, for a man that walks and moves by a principle of life, that is within. Do you duties from an inward principle of grace? And do you do the will of God cordially from the heart? And do you do the will of God sincerely, aiming at the honour and glory of God? And do you do it fully and constantly? Do not these Questions puzzle many of you? What satisfactory answer can your Consciences give to such Interrogatories as these are? Happy is the man, that with a good Conscience, can give answer to these Questions, that can say, *It is the desire of my heart in sincerity, to do the will of God fully and constantly.*

Thirdly, For a close of this first Poynt, with a word of Exhortation, I beseech you, as you would be Disciples of Christ, set upon this work, of doing the will of God; and here let me shew you some Rules and Directions.

First, Would you do the will of God? then shake off security, and slothfulnesse, and formality, and coldnesse, in Religion; formality eats out the heart of Religion, *Strive to enter in at the streight Gate*; strive as in an Agony, *Luke* 13. 24. Whatever you do in the service of God, do it with all your might. It was the great commendation of that good King *Hezekiah*, *That in every work, that he began in the service of the House of God, and in the*

the Law, and in the Commandements, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, 2 Chron. 31. 21.

Secondly, Labour for a ſtrong Faith, for Faith is the Nurſe of Obedience, *Heb.* 11. 8. *By Faith Abraham obeyed God,* and he obeyed him in as hard Commands as ever you heard of, which was to leave his Countrey, to leave his own Habitation, and all that he had, and to go into a ſtrange Land, into a place he knew not whether; another Command that he obeyed, was in the ſacrificing of his deareſt and only Son *Iſaac, By Faith he obeyed God.* And you read of *the Obedience of Faith,* Rom. 16. 26.

Thirdly, Would you do the will of God? then ſet about it without delay; *To day, if you will hear his voyce, harden not your hearts,* Heb. 3. 7. *I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy Commandements,* Pſal. 119. 60.

Fourthly, Study ſelf-denyal, croſſe your own wills, that Gods will may be fulfilled; all the controverſie between God and ſuch poor worms as we are, is this, *Whether Gods will or ours ſhall be obeyed?* Study ſelf-denyal, for, if Gods will, and your will, meet upon a narrow Bridge, and one muſt give way to the other, if you be not well ballaced with ſelf-denyal, you will croſſe Gods will, to do your own.

Now let me lay before you ſome Motives to quicken you to do the will of God.

Firſt, I beſeech you to remember this, This doing of the will of God, will prove you to be the Children of God, that you have God to be your Father. O what an honour is it to have God to be your Father! It is more than if you had all the

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Kingdoms of the world in your possession, for so many thousand years. This doing of the will of God, will shew you to be the true Children of God; for, how doth our Saviour prove those stubborn *Jews* to be the children of the Devil? *John* 8. 44. *You are of your father the Devil, and the will of your father you will do*; You do the Devils will, and therefore you are the Devils children. So here, if you do the will of your Heavenly Father, it is a plain token that you are his Children.

Secondly, Consider what a high price and esteem you shall be in with the Lord Christ himself, by doing the will of God; consider what a high price the Lord Christ will put upon you, you shall be related to him, *Mat.* 12. *ult. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother.* Christ looks upon such a one in neer relation to himself.

Thirdly, Consider, this is that which will yield you honey and sweetnesse in all conditions, if you be careful to do the will of your Heavenly Father, *Psal.* 63. 5. *My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatnesse.* And that is an excellent Scripture, *Psal.* 119. 56. *This I had because I kept thy Precepts. This I had*, what is that? This comfort I had, this supportation I had in all my afflictions, this consolation I had, this sweet Communion with God I had; why? *because I kept thy Precepts*, I obeyed thy will. Look how much Obedience is yielded to the Commands of God, so much Comfort doth flow into the soul; God usually gives in Comforts proportionably to our Obedience. O the sweet soul-satisfying Consola-

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tion a Child of God finds in the ways of God, and in doing the will of God! especially when he lyes on his death-bed, then it will be sweeter to him than the honey and honey-comb, then will he say with good King *Hezekiah*, when he lay upon his death-bed, *Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy sight.* O that sweet satisfaction that a Soul shall find in God, when he comes to appear before God!

Then here is one Motive more in the Text, and that is the next Poynt I shall come unto, the great encouragement that he shall have in doing the will of God; for, saith our Saviour, *He that doth the will of God, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self*: That is the Poynt I shall speak to next time, *They that are the Doers of the will of God, shall know more of his will, and shall be more assured of what his will is.*

John 7. 17.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.

NOw I come to the second Doctrine, which is principally and especially held forth in this Text, and it is this,

That he that doth the will of God, shall know more of it, and shall be more assured of what he knows.

For the better handling of this weighty Truth, uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ, it will not be amiss to divide the Doctrine into two Branches or into two Propositions, and to speak distinctly to each of them.

The first Branch of the Doctrine, is this, *He that doth the will of God shall know more of his will.*

The second is this, *He that doth the will of God shall be more assured of what he knows.*

For the first Proposition, or the first Branch of the Doctrine, *He that doth the will of God, shall know more of his will.* God will reveal himself more fully, more clearly, to such a Soul as is careful to live

live up to his light, to walk according to the measure of knowledge he hath received; this is that our Saviour promiseth, in *Mat.* 13. 12. *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given*: What is the meaning of this? That is, as learned *Pareus* well expounds the place, he that hath the beginning of saving knowledge, and sound Conversion, and sincere Faith, and Obedience, *To him shall be given.* What shall be given? There shall be given an increase of that knowledge, an increase of that faith, an encrease of that love, an encrease of that obedience: *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given.* But on the contrary, Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, that he seemeth to have, that is, from hypocrites that make a fair shew, as if they had grace, saving knowledge, true repentance, and the like; from him shall be taken away that he seemeth to have. This is an excellent Scripture to prove the perseverance of the Saints, they shall encrease in grace; but then on the contrary, it proves the warping, declining, and withering condition of hypocrites, they shall grow worse and worse, and lose those gifts that they have. The *Arminians* they make a wicked construction and interpretation of this place of Scripture, for they say, *He that hath, and well improves his natural parts and abilities, he deserves the gift of saving grace*: This is their Exposition, *He that well useth the gift of Nature, doth deserve of God the gift of saving grace*; this is a false Exposition, and a reasoning against reason; for our Saviours words must

be underſtood thus, *To him that hath, ſhall be given*. He that well uſeth the gifts of Nature, true indeed, he ſhall have an encreaſe of the gifts of Nature; for example, *Ariſtotle* and *Plato*, and the better ſort of Heathen, well uſing the gifts of Nature, had the gifts of Nature encreaſed, and they grew to be excellent men, ſo far as the light of Nature would carry them, God gave them an encreaſe of the gifts of Nature; but now, he that well uſeth the gifts of grace, to him ſhall be given, he ſhall have an encreaſe of thoſe gifts of grace. Hitherto tends that excellent paſſage of the Prophet *David*, *Pſal.* 25. 12. *What man is he that feareth the Lord, him ſhall he teach in the way that he ſhall chuſe.* Mark this Scripture well: That man that conſciencioufly walketh in the fear of the Lord, and in obedience to his Commands, he ſhall have more light, and more direction from the God of his Salvation; God will teach him, and God will direct him, and God will enable him to walk in a way that is well-pleaſing in his ſight; that God whom he fears, will guide and direct him to walk in paths of righteouſneſſe. So in *verſ.* 14. of the ſame *Pſalm*, *The ſecrets of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* A marvelous ſweet and comfortable Scripture! *The ſecrets of the Lord*, that is, God will reveal ſome ſecret, ſome myſtery of his, ſome myſteries of grace, and of the power of grace, *to thoſe that do fear him*, and conſcientiouſly practiſe what they know; God will (as I may ſay) make them of his Privy-Council, they ſhall be acquainted with ſome ſecrets of God, that others are not acquainted with: and the Prophet here inſtances in one ſecret,

cret, *God will shew them his Covenant.* O what a sweet promise is that! God will shew them the excellency and sweetness of the Covenant of grace; that Covenant *David* speaks of, 2 *Sam.* 23. *Although my House be not so with God.* Alas, I have had many failings, failings in my Political Relations, and failings in my Domestical Relations, as a King, as a Master, as a Father; though my House be not so with God, though it hath no been ordered as it should be, *yet he hath made with me a Covenant, sure, and stedfast, and ordered in all things aright.* Never mortal man was saved by a Covenant of works; all that have been, and all that shall be saved, were and shall be saved by a Covenant of grace. Now, that man that feareth God, God will shew him the Covenant of grace, and God will shew that man the unconceiveable beauty, and sweetnesse, and all-sufficiency that is in Jesus Christ! God will shew to such a man the marvelous sweet, and secret contentment that is in the power of Godlinesse! God will shew such a man the invaluable comforts of his Spirit, the Sweet-meats of Heaven, those soul-ravishing, and soul-satisfying comforts, that delight the soul! *Psal.* 94. 19. *Thy Comforts delight my Soul.* God will shew such a man the transcendent excellencies of those glorious hopes that are laid up in Heaven for the Saints in light! Thus the *secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him.* Some secrets and mysteries that are not shewn to the world, God will reveal to all those that fear his Name, that do conscientiously walk before him, that live up to their light. And what a sweet and precious promise is that, which our Saviour made in *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandements, and keeps them,*

he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self to him. Mark, that man that loves God, and that walks in a way of obedience, that lives up to his light, that doth the will of God, he shall know more of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ will more fully manifest himself unto him, I will love him, and I will manifest my self unto him, he shall have more discoveries of my love. To name but one Scripture more, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* These two go together; if you grow in grace, certainly you shall grow in knowledge; if you grow in obedience, certainly your obedience shall encrease your knowledge in the mysteries of God.

For the Explication of the Doctrine, two Queries there are that would be satisfied.

First, *How, or in what respect our obedience shall encrease our knowledge?*

Secondly, *How it comes to passe, or what reason can be rendred, why the obedient Christian shall know more of Gods will?*

For the first, *How, or in what respect, our obedience shall encrease our knowledge? He that obeys the will of God shall know more of his will.* How shall he know more?

I answer, The knowledge of an obedient Christian shall be encreased in three respects.

First, In regard of its Subject.

Secondly, In regard of its Object.

Thirdly, In regard of the Manner of it.

First, The knowledge of an obedient Christian shall be encreased in the Subject of it, or the

Seat

Seat of it where it is placed, as I may call it; now the Seat of knowledge is the mind of man, the intelectual part of man; his intelectual faculty shall be enlarged by his obedience, it shall be made more capable of receiving Heavenly truths, than it was before, God will enlarge that mans understanding; whereas before he was but a Babe in knowledge and understanding, now he shall be a grown man; whereas before he could but digest Milk, now he shall be able to digest Strong Meat; whereas before he was but faint and feeble in knowledge, now he shall be strong like *David*, Zech. 12. 8. *In that day shall the Lord defend the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day, shall be as David.*

Secondly, The knowledge of an obedient Christian shall be encreased and enlarged in the Object of it; the Object I call those matters or things, that are to be known; such a one shall know more truths, more mysteries of Godliness, more of Gods secrets, he shall have more manifestations of the Spirit of God revealed to him, more discoveries of truth from day to day; it is that which God hath promised, *Isa.* 11. 9. *The Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea.* The Prophet speaks of a larger measure of knowledge, and further discoveries of truths, than was wont to be made.

Thirdly, The knowledge of an obedient Christian shall be encreased in regard of the Manner of knowledge; he shall know the Truths of God in a better manner than he was wont to do; *How is that?* you will say: I answer, and shall give you an instance in five particulars.

First, He ſhall know truths more inwardly.

Secondly, He ſhall know truths more experimentally.

Thirdly, He ſhall know truths more transformingly.

Fourthly, He ſhall know truths more powerfully.

Fifthly, He ſhall know truths more ſatisfyingly.

First, An obedient Chriſtian ſhall know truths more inwardly, more feelingly than he was wont to do; not only have a bare apprehenſion, but ſuch a knowledge as ſhall take an impreſſion upon his heart; and therefore this inward knowledge is compared to ſeeing, and to taſting, and to ſmelling.

First, It is compared to ſeeing, *Eph.* 3. 8, 9. *Unto me who am leſſe than the leaſt of all Saints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the Unſearchable Riches of Chriſt; and to make all men ſee,* (not only know, but ſee) *what is the fellowſhip of the miſtery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who Created all things by Jeſus Chriſt.* The *Italian* Tranſlation renders it, that all men may ſee what was the diſpenſation of the miſtery, which was hid from the beginning of the world, which God was pleaſed to hide in himſelf from the beginning of the world, that all men may ſee. I quote that Scripture to prove that inward knowledge is compared to ſeeing, and ſeeing is more than a bare report, according to that of *Job*, Job 42. 5. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye ſeeth thee, I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.*

Secondly,

Secondly, This inward knowledge is compared to tasting, 1 *Pet.* 2. 3. *If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* Tasting is more than knowing, and tasting is more than seeing. If all the Orators in the world should describe what the sweetness of Honey is, they could not do it so well as a man that tasts it. Now the Soul comes to tast the sweetnesse that is in Jesus Christ. Notional knowledge is one thing, and tasting knowledge is another thing; they have a feeling, experimental knowledge in their own hearts. That is another.

Thirdly, This inward knowledge is compared, not only to seeing, and to tasting, but it is compared to smelling also, *Isa.* 11. 3. *And the Spirit of the Lord shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*: So the words are read; but the Hebrew phrase carries it thus, and so it is in the Margin of your Bibles, *The Spirit of the Lord shall make him of quick sent, or smell, in the fear of the Lord.* That is, a man that is once taught by the Spirit of God, that is taught of God, as our Saviour useth the Phrase, such a man shall sent and smell, and savour, and breath out nothing but holinesse. As our Saviour, it is said of him, *All thy garments smell of Myrrh, and Aloes, and Cassia,* Psal. 45. 8. *And because of the savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth,* Cant. 1. 3. Look as the Ointment that was poured on our Saviours head, left such a sent or smel behind it, that the whole house was filled with the savour of it, *John* 12. 3. So is it in this case; a man that hath once received the Spirit of God, and is taught by the Spirit of God, such a man shall have such a sweet savour of the knowledge of God, that it

it shall be able to diffuse it self to others, 2 *Cor.* 2. 14. The Apostle St. *Paul* blesseth God for this, that *he caused them to triumph in Christ, and make manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.* And our Latine word for wisdome, *Sapientia*, it hath its derivation from this, it is a savoury knowledge. So that this inward knowledge, is more than bare apprehension, it is you see compared to seeing, to tasting, and to smelling.

Secondly, He shall know truths more experimentally than he did before; and this is that you read of, *John* 4. 42. It is the speech of the *Samaritans* to the woman that had left her Water-pot, and went into the City of *Samaria*, and declared to them of the City, what she had heard and seen concerning Christ; *Now* (say they) *we believe, not for thy sayings, for we have heard him our selves, and know that this indeed is the Christ, the Saviour of the world.* And thus likewise did the Disciples make a Confession of Christ, *John* 6. 69. *And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Thirdly, An obedient Christian shall know truths more transformingly; that is, he shall be transformed into the very Image of those truths that he knows, 2 *Cor.* 3. *ult. But we all with open face, beholding as in a glasse, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*: That is, we are changed from one degree of grace unto another, by the Spirit of God. That is an excellent knowledge, that is a transforming knowledg, that makes a Christian have a heart framed into the Word of God, that is cast into the Mould of the Doctrine

of

of the Word of God, made like unto it, as Lead that is melted, and cast into a Mould, is of the shape of the Mould, *Rom.* 6. 17. *But ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of Doctrine which was delivered you*, or *into which ye were delivered or cast.*

Fourthly, An obedient Christian shall know truths more powerfully than he did before, that those truths which he knows shall over-awe his heart, that he dare do nothing against the truth, but for the truth, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. *For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.* Acts 4. 20. *We cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen.* It was an excellent speech of St. *Hierom, I can dye for the truth, but I cannot deny the truth, nor be silent*; whereas another man it may be, he can oppose the truth, and the ways of truth, though he knows he ought not to do it; it may be another man can break his vows and covenants, and promises, and protestations, although he knows the sin of Covenant-breaking is a grievous sin, and shall be severely punished, as appears by that remarkable Scripture, *Ezek.* 17. 15, 16. Where it is testified of *Zedekiah*, that after he had made a Covenant with *Nebuchadnezzar*, he rebelled against him; and saith God, *Shall he prosper, he that doth such things as these are? shall he prolong his dayes? He hath broken his Covenant, saith God, shall he be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord, he shall dye in that Land for his Covenant-breaking.* So I say, a man may have so much knowledge, that he knows such and such things are sin, and he may know *the Judgement of God, that they that do such things, are worthy of death, yet*

they

they do it, and take pleaſure in them that do it. For example, many know that whoredome is a ſin, and a damnable ſin, that carries thouſands to Hell: *Stollen waters are ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is pleaſant; but he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her Gueſts are in the depths of Hell,* *Prov.* 9. 17, 18. Thoſe works of darkneſſe are pleaſant for a while; but the Devils banquet, ſhall have the Devils ſhot. Though a wicked man knows that whoredome is a ſin, yet his knowledge is ſo weak, that it hath no powerful influence upon his heart and life; but now an obedient Chriſtian, he ſhall know truths ſo powerfully, that they ſhall have an awe upon his Soul. Thus was it with the Prophet *David*, Pſal. 119. 161. *Princes have perſecuted me without a cauſe, but my heart ſtands in awe of thy Word.* That is the fourth, an obedient Chriſtian knows truths more powerfully.

Fifthly, He that doth the will of God for the manner of his knowledge, ſhall know truths more ſatisfyingly, to overſway all Objections that are made againſt him, and all diſcouragements that he meets with in the way of holineſſe. St. *Paul* tells us how it was with him in this regard, *Gal.* 1. 15, 16. *When it pleaſed God to reveal Jeſus Chriſt in me.* That phraſe [*in me*] is very remarkable. A man may have Jeſus Chriſt revealed to him, and yet not revealed in him; but when God revealed Chriſt in me, *immediately I conſulted not with fleſh and blood*; but this knowledge did preponder and outweigh all objections that could be made againſt it. Another man that hath but a weak and feeble knowledge, it may be he takes check at the wayes of holineſſe, and what ſayes he? If I walk in a ſtrict way,

way, and am circumspect and careful in ordering my conversation, I shall be scorned, and opposed, and contemned; and these his Objections prevails with him. A man now on the other side that is taught of God, is able to answer all these Objections, and to passe through good report, and ill report. This is the first thing for Explication.

Secondly, By way of Explication, it may be demanded, *But how comes it to passe that obedient Christians shall know more than others?*

For answer to this, I shall give you these four Reasons for it.

First, Because God hath promised the Holy Ghost to them that obey him, *Acts* 5.31,32. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgivenesse of sins: and we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* You must understand it aright. God doth not promise the Holy Ghost for our obedience, but in a way of obedience; now if God give his Spirit to them that obey him, then they shall have more knowledge, they shall know more of his will; for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of light, and opens our understanding. The Spirit of God is a teaching Spirit, and they that are taught by the Spirit of God, shall certainly come to Jesus Christ, *John* 6.45. *All thy children shall be taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me,* Isa. 54.13.—And the Spirit of God is a leading Spirit, *The Spirit will lead you into all Truth*; the Spirit will not only take you by the hand, but lead

lead you in the way that you should walk in. As you lead your children when you teach them to go, so the Spirit will lead you into all truth; that man to whom the Spirit of God is given, must certainly needs know more of the Mistery of Salvation.

Secondly, A second Reason is this, Because God hath made many promises to the obedient; how many precious promises have you in that one Scripture? *Deut.* 28. *If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voyce of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his Commandements; then the Lord thy God will set thee on high, above all the Nations of the Earth, and all these blessings shall come upon thee; blessed shalt thou be in the City, and in the Field, and in the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and in the fruit of thy Cattel, and thy Kine, and the Flocks of thy Sheep; and blessed shall be thy basket, and thy store; blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and when thou goest out*, &c. There are blessings of all sorts promised, and among others this is one; and saith our Saviour, *To him that hath, shall be given*; and it is twice repeated in one Evangelist, in *Mat.* 13.12. & *Mat.* 25.29. *To him that hath, shall be given*; he that well useth his talents, shall have more talents given to him.

Thirdly, Because God doth love to reward his Servants. Just as a Master deals with his Factor beyond the Seas, when he sees that he deals faithfully with him in smaller matters, he intrusts him with more of his estate; so when God sees us faithful in a little, he trusts us with more; when he

he ſees us to uſe one talent well, he will give us five talents to trade with.

Fourthly, Becauſe the more grace is acted, the more it grows and is encreaſed. Remarkable is that Scripture, *Heb.* 5. *ult.* *But ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even thoſe who, by reaſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil*; By reaſon of uſe have their ſpiritual ſenſes exerciſed. Uſe legs, as we ſay, and have legs; the more a man ſets about this Heavenly employment of acting of grace, the more grace he ſhall have in his heart.

Now for the Application of this Poynt; and firſt by way of Inſtruction; it ſerves to let you ſee what is the reaſon of that truth which carnal men will hardly believe, That Godly men are the only wiſe men, and that wicked men though they are never ſo knowing, are errant fools; this is a truth plainly ſet down in this Scripture, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdome*, Prov. 9. 10. None are wiſe but thoſe that fear the Lord; none are prudent in Gods account, but thoſe that are obedient, thoſe that practiſe what they know; practical Chriſtians, are the only prudent Chriſtians in Gods account. Remarkable is that Scripture, *Deut.* 4. 5, 6. *Behold I have taught you Statutes and Judgements, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye ſhould do ſo in the Land whether ye go to poſſeſſe. Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wiſdom and underſtanding in the ſight of the Nations, that ſhall hear theſe Statutes, and ſay, Surely this great Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding People.* But now on the contrary, wicked men, let

let them have never so much knowledge, let them have as much knowledge as the wicked Angels, who are knowing Spirits (the D vils are inteligent Spirits) if he do not put his knowledge into practice, if he be a wicked man, he is in Gods account an errant fool, he is but a very Sot, *He is in darkneſſe, and walketh in darkneſſe, and knoweth not whether he goeth, becauſe darkneſſe hath blinded his eyes*, 1 John 2. 11.

The ſecond Uſe it is by way of Exhortation; and let it be a powerful perſwaſion to every one here preſent; and O that I could leave this Exhortation warm upon your hearts! O that I could put you upon the practice of what you have heard! I beſeech you, as ever you deſire that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould take you by the hand, and kiſſe you with the kiſſes of his mouth, and manifeſt his love to you; as ever you deſire that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould make fuller diſcoveries of himſelf to you, labour to practice what you know, live up to your light, do not foſter or favour any known ſin, nor bauk, nor decline any known duty, but live up to your light. Now that I may preſſe you to it, conſider

Firſt, We live in times of libertiniſm and looſneſſe, wherein many hold the truth in unrighteouſneſſe; *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt them that impriſon the truth*, that ſin againſt the light of their knowledge and Conſcience, that blow out the Candle, leſt it ſhould diſcover truth to them: *Light is come into the world, but men love darkneſſe rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil*, John 3. 19. *And this is the condemnation* to them with a witneſſe, who ſhut out the light

light out of their soules. *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodlinesse and unrighteousnesse of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousnesse*, Rom. 1. 18. Let me set on this Consideration with this Motive.

First, Consider how little it is that we know of God: The very best of Gods Saints and Servants, how little do they know of him? to use *Jobs* phrase *Job 26. ult. How little a portion is heard of him!* What a little knowledg is it, that the most knowing men have? there is a thousand times more excellency, and fulnesse, and sweetnesse, and soul-satisfaction, and beauty, and all-sufficiency in God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, than ever yet was known or discovered; *How little a portion do we know of God!* The greatest part of our knowledge, is the least part of our ignorance; we are ignorant of a thousand times more than we know. There are *unsearchable riches in Jesus Christ*, as the Apostle calls them, *Eph.* 3. 8. There is a thousand times more riches in Christ, than ever was discovered, Mines of wisdom and knowledge, that you were never yet acquainted with; now if you would know more, practise what you do know.

Secondly, Consider the more you know of God, the neerer do you come to Heaven; for the fullnesse of the Saints happinesse in Heaven will be this, when they shall see God as he is, and know him as as he is, 1 *John* 3. 2. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Heaven consists in the Beatifical Vision of God, a sight of God, seeing of him as he is in Heaven. *David* gives

you a glimpse of Heaven in one Verse, *Psal.* 17. *ult. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.* Heaven consists in the vision of God; in conformity to God, and in satisfaction in God, this is Heaven, Vision of God, *I will behold thy face in righteousness*; Conformity to God, *When I awake with thy likeness*; Satisfaction in God, *I shall be satisfied*; then our knowledge will be perfected.

Thirdly, Consider that this experimental knowledge that springs from obedience, will make you sound and solid Christians, that you shall not take up Religion upon trust, but you shall know upon what grounds you believe, upon what grounds you have the hope of eternal happinesse, you shall not have your Religion upon trust or tradition, you shall have a certain evidence of your interest in Jesus Christ, and your hope of eternal happiness, you shall be able to read your names written in Heaven. On the contrary, take away that experimental knowledge that springs from obedience, and a man may be a *Turk* upon the same ground that he is a Christian, because he takes his Religion upon trust: Take away this experimental knowledge, a man may be of any Religion, as well as a Christian. O get this knowledge that springs from obedience, then you will know upon what grounds you take up Religion, and your hopes of Heaven and happinesse will be upon good grounds.

Fourthly, Consider God looks upon all your knowledge as nothing worth, unless you practise what you know, and live up to your light; God looks upon all your praying, and reading, and hearing, and communicating, as nothing, if so be you do

do not live up to what you know, *Jer.* 32. 23. *And they came in, and possessed it, but they obeyed not thy voyce, neither walked in thy Law, they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do.* What had they done nothing that God commanded to do? they had circumcised their children in obedience to Gods Command, they offered Sacrifices, they came to the Temple, they did many ~~s~~pecious outward duties; but saith the Prophet, *They did nothing of all that God commanded them*; Why? because they did not practice what they knew, their lives were not answerable to the profession they made; therefore God esteemed their profession, no profession, God esteemed their Sacrifices, no Sacrifices; take your Sacrifices to your selves, *Ezek.* 20. *Your new Moons, and your Sabbaths, and solemn Assemblies, I am weary of them,* saith God, *they are an abomination unto me.* All their outward professions were nothing, because they did not practise what they knew. It is said of the sons of *Eli*, that *they were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 12. It may be thou mayest have a great deal of notional knowledge, thy tongue may be so tipt with Religion, that thou mayest be able to discourse upon Poynts of Religion very judiciously, thou mayest be able to give an account of thy Faith, thou mayest be able to answer an Argument, thou mayest be able to defend the Truth; yet, if so be thou dost not live according to thy knowledge, in Gods account still thou knowest nothing at all; God notwithstanding all thy knowledge, looks upon thee but as an ignorant Sot, as it is said of *Israel*, Jer. 4. 22. *For my People are foolish, they have not known me, they*

are sottish children, and have no understanding.

Again, though thou mayest hear a thousand Sermons, if thou dost not frame thy life according to the Rule and Prescript of the Word of God, in Gods esteem thou art as one that never heard a Sermon in all thy life; and is not this a pityful thing? for a man for want of practise shall lose all that he hath done, all his Prayers, and all his Hearing, and all his Communicating at the Lords Table, for an unpractical Christian in Gods account, hath done nothing at all; me-thinks this should work upon your hearts. If ever therefore you desire that God should look upon you, as upon his Children, that God should own you in a day when you would give a whole World for a smile of his face; If ever you desire that Jesus Christ should give this testimony of you, *Father, here are they that have kept thy Word*; if ever you would have God to say to you, as he saith of some, *These are my Children*, then rest not in a bare notional profession of the truth, but let profession and practice, Science and Conscience, go together. This is the first Branch of the Doctrine, or the first Proposition, *They that obey the Will of God, shall know more of his Will.*

John

John 7. 17.

If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.

I Come now to the ſecond Propoſition, which is this,

He that doth the will of God, ſhall be more aſſured of what he knows.

This is that which our Saviour implies, when he ſaith, *He ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf*; that is, he ſhall know it more certainly, know it more aſſuredly. To this agrees that ſpeech of our Saviour, *John* 8. 31, 32. *If you continue in my Word, then are you my Diſciples indeed, and you ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.* Such an aſſured knowledge had the Diſciples, *John* 6. 69. *And we believe, and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God.* It was not a conjectural knowledge, but a certain knowledge; ſay they, *We believe, and are ſure.* And ſuch a knowledge had St. *Paul*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know whom*

I have believed, and I am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day; He is able to keep my Soul, my Salvation, which he calls his *Depoſitum*, which he had depoſited with God. For the better Explication of this Truth, *That he that doth the will of God, ſhall be more aſſured of what he knows*; it may be demanded, *What is this certainty, or aſſurance of knowledge?*

Firſt, There are ſome things to be premiſed, or Cautions to be obſerved, for the finding out the Nature of this ſure and certain knowledge.

Secondly, I will give you ſome diſtinctions of knowledge, whereby you may ſee what it is I am ſpeaking of.

Thirdly, I will then give you the Deſcription of this ſure and certain knowledge.

1. That you may know what this certainty of knowledge is, there are ſome things to be premiſed, ſome Cautions for the finding out of this ſure and certain knowledge, and the Cautions are theſe five.

Firſt, When I ſpeak of ſure and certain knowledge, I do not mean an aſſurance of Salvation, neither do I ſpeak of the reflect act of knowledge, whereby we know that which we know, 1 *John* 2. 3. *Hereby we know that we know*; but I ſpeak of that the Apoſtle calls the full aſſurance of underſtanding, *Col.* 2. 2. When a man is ſo *rooted, ſetled, and ſtabliſhed in the preſent truth*, (Eph. 4. 14. 2 *Pet.* 1. 12.) that he is not alwayes doubting, imagining, hæſitating, *and carried about with every wind of Doctrine.*

The

The second Caution is this, When I speak of full assurance of understanding, you must remember, that there cannot be such a full assurance attained, that will be absolute and perfect: certainly, an absolute, perfect certainty of knowledge, cannot be attained in this life, that is free from all doubting, for our knowledge in this life at the best is but imperfect, *We know but in part*, saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 13. 9. Although it be not absolutely perfect, yet it is so strong that it will not be over-swayed by the opinion of others, though they be very learned men. And this is that which the Apostle means in that Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. *The spiritual man judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of no man.* That is, he is able to judge, and discern between truth and error, between Copper and Gold, between Food and Poyson, he is able to discern Error from Truth. *He himself is judged of no man*; that is, he is so certainly assured of the truth that he holds, that the contrary judgement of others, though men of greater parts, and greater Scholars, shall not over-sway him, or make him to stagger. It is true indeed, *Thomas* staggered a while at the Doctrine of the Resurrection, yet he recovered himself, and afterwards came to that certainty, that he cryed out, *My Lord, and my God*, John 20. 28. A man (for example) may meet with some knots in Religion, some knotty Disputations, he may meet with some Objections that he doth not know how to answer; as St. *Austin* said, *That original sin was propagated to the Soul, I know it certainly, but how it is propagated, I cannot tell.* A man may meet with some objections that he cannot answer, however, he will not be over-swayed

so as to forsake the Truth, because he cannot answer some Objections.

Thirdly, When I speak of this full assurance of understanding, or knowledge in the mysteries of our Salvation, this Caution likewise must be remembred, That though it is true, that God doth bestow it upon those that do his will, yet it is not gained only by doing the will of God, but it is gained especially by the gift of the Spirit of God. When St. *Peter* made that excellent confession of Christ, when our Saviour asked his Disciples, *But whom say ye that I am? he answered, and said, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,* (Mat. 16. 15,16,17.) *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* It is the Spirit of God that leads us into all Truth.

Fourthly, When I speak of a certainty of knowledge, you must remember, that it is not a common gift of the Spirit of God, but it is a saving gift of the Spirit of God, for so saith our Saviour, *Mat.* 13. 11, 12, 13. *To you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdome of Heaven, but to others it is not given; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance, but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath; therefore speak I to them in Parables, because they seeing, see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.* This same certainty of knowledge, therefore is not attained by any natural qualification, it is not a knowledge that can be gotten, or learned in Natures School, it is not gotten by Art or industry, or reading of Books,

Books, neither is it gotten by Tradition. The *Gentiles* had a Natural knowledge of God, *Rom.* 1. 21. *Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.* They knew God by a Natural light, but it is a knowledge that is revealed by the Spirit of God; and therefore the Spirit of God is called the *Spirit of Wisdome, and Revelation, in the knowledge of him*, Eph. 1. 17.

Fifthly, Take this Caution, this assurance of knowledge is gradual; that is, it hath different degrees, in some it is more, and in some it is lesse; some are but Babes in Christ, others there are that are strong men; some *are weak in the Faith*, Rom. 14. 1. Others are *rooted in Christ, and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith*, Col. 2. 7. This certainty of understanding at the first is but very weak; as the Disciples of Christ in the great Poynt of the Resurrection, at the first they were not clear in their knowledge of it, *Luke* 24. 21. *We trusted that it had been him which should have redeemed Israel; besides all this, to day is the third day, since these things were done*; so that now our hope is almost at an end, in the great business of our Saviours Resurrection: They were not clear at the first. A man that hath this certainty of knowledge, may have but a weak beginning at the first, and yet notwithstanding it will encrease more and more, like *the morning light, that shines more and more to the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. So that a man will at last come to be grounded, and stablished in the truth, he will *be stedfast, and unmoveable, abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. *ult. He will be stablished in Christ, and grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Per. 3. ult.

Secondly,

Secondly, Let me give you ſome Diſtinctions of knowledge, that you may be the better able to find it out. Knowledge you muſt know is twofold, there is a Natural, and a Supernatural knowledge. Firſt, Natural knowledge which is ingraven in the Soul of man by Nature, as the *Gentiles* by Nature knew God, *Rom.* 1. 21. That is a Natural knowledge that is gotten by Art, and induſtry, as the knowledge of Aſtronomy is, and the like.

Secondly, Supernatural knowledge that is revealed by the Spirit of God: Now Supernatural knowledge is twofold,— Firſt, It is either common: — or Secondly, It is ſaving. There is a common Supernatural knowledge, that is common to the Reprobates, as well as to the Elect; for Reprobates who ſin the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, they are enlightned with a Supernatural light. Every thing that is Supernatural, is not Spiritual; the Devils they have a Supernatural light, and yet it is not a ſpiritual, nor ſanctifying light; and therefore they that ſin the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, have common light, which is Supernatural; the Text ſaith, *They have received the knowledge of the truth*, Heb. 10. 26.

Secondly, There is a ſaving Supernatural light, *viz.* that which is infuſed into the Souls of the Regenerate, by the ſaving work of Gods Holy Spirit. Now this Supernatural ſaving light, that is again twofold.

Firſt, it is either mediate, that is that which is acquired by means, as reading, hearing, and praying, waiting upon God in the uſe of his Ordinances, according as God told St. *Paul* in the preaching of the Word, *Mens eyes ſhould be opened, and*

and they ſhould be turned from darkneſſe to light, and from the power of Satan to God, Acts 26. 18.

Secondly, Or elſe it is immediate, and this is that light which is darted into the Soul, without the uſe of means. St. *Paul* (for example) he was enlightned miraculouſly by a Revelation from Heaven, *Acts* 9. And ſo in the Converſion of the Jaylor, how wonderfully was he enlightned on a ſudden! *Acts* 16. And the Converſion of the Thief on the Croſſe, it was done immediately by the Spirit of God. Now when I am ſpeaking of this certainty of knowledge, I ſpeak not of a Natural, but of a Supernatural knowledge; neither do I ſpeak of a common Supernatural knowledge, but of the ſanctifying, and ſaving gift of the Spirit of God; neither do I ſpeak of the immediate without the means, but I ſpeak of the mediate in the uſe of means; therefore to come to the third thing, that is to give you the Deſcription of this certain and aſſured knowledge; and the Deſcription is this.

Certainty of ſpiritual knowledge, it is a ſaving work of the Spirit of God, whereby a Believer receives ſatisfying light, and doth give up his underſtanding reſolvedly to thoſe Truths that are revealed to him. There are theſe five things to be noted in this Deſcription.

Firſt, I ſay it is a ſaving work of the Spirit of God. It is not the knowledge of Devils, the Devils have a Supernatural knowledge; neither is it the knowledge of Hypocrites, ſuch a knowledge as they that ſin the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt may have, but it is that knowledge that is darted into the Soul by the Holy Spirit of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10.

Eye

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. The Apostle speaks it of the Kingdome of Grace, as well as of the Kingdome of Glory; man doth not know the work of the Spirit of Grace on the heart; but saith he in the words following, *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.* And it is the Spirit of God, that is said, *to guide us into all truth,* John 16. 13. That is the first thing in the Description, it is a saving work of the Spirit of God.

Secondly, It is a knowledge whereby a Believer hath received satisfying light.

First, A Believer hath received light. The truth is, none doth know the Truth aright, but he that believes it; therefore believing and knowing the Truth, are joyned together, 1 *Tim.* 4. 3. *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created, to be received with thanksgiving, of them which believe, and know the Truth.*

Thirdly, I note this, whereby a Believer receiving satisfying light. *But what is that light* (may be some of you will say) *that may be called satisfying light?*

I answer, and shall give you an account of it in these five particulars.

First, That is a satisfying light, that is joyned with a powerful Conviction upon the Conscience, when *the Spirit of God doth convince us of sin, and of Righteousnesse, and Judgement,* John 16. 8. That is a satisfying light, when the Spirit of God breaks in upon the Soul with such an irresistable light, that

a man cannot gain-say it, or with-ſtand it; for example, When the Sun is riſen in the morning, a man then knows it is day, and if a thouſand ſhould ſay to the contrary, he would ſay, *I know it is day.* Such is the light of the Spirit of God, it is an irreſiſtable light, it breaks in upon the heart with that power, that the heart cannot gain-ſay it.

Secondly, That is a ſatisfying light, which ſettles and ſtabliſheth a man in the preſent Truth, that he will not be removed from it: When a man is rooted in the Faith, ſetled and ſtabliſhed in Jeſus Chriſt, then he hath received a ſatisfying light.

Thirdly, That is a ſatisfying light, when a man can act Faith upon that light he hath received, and make bold adventures for the Truth that he hath embraced, when he can act Faith upon it; ſo did thoſe three Worthies in *Daniel* 3. 17. They had received ſuch ſatisfying light, that God was the true God, and his Worſhip the true Worſhip, that they ventured a Furnace for it; ſay they, *If it be ſo, Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O King: but if not, be it known unto thee O King, that we will not ſerve thy Gods, nor worſhip thy Golden Image which thou haſt ſet up.*

Fourthly, That is a ſatisfying light, which will enable a man to diſcern between Truth and falſehood, though error be masked with never ſuch fair pretences, yet notwithſtanding a man ſhall be able to diſcover that error, and abhor it: and though truth be eclipſed with never ſo many falſe Gloſſes, and Interpretations, and never ſo much oppoſed, yet a man can diſcern it, and cloſe with it, and cleave to it.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, That is a ſatisfying light, that will enable a man to reconcile ſome ſeeming difference that are in the Scriptures. Let me give you an inſtance in one or two; thoſe two places compared together, *Gen. 6. 6. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the Earth, and it grieved him at his heart*; but in the *Numb.* 23. 19. it is ſaid, *God is not as man that he ſhould lye, neither the Son of man that he ſhould repent.* Now a man that hath this ſatisfying light, he knows how to reconcile theſe two places thus; Repentance in God, is not a change of his Will, but of his Work; God is ſaid to repent after the manner of men, becauſe he doth thoſe things that man doth, when he repents. Let me give you another inſtance, St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 3. 28. *Therefore we conclude, that a man is juſtified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law.* But St. *James* he tells the quite contrary, *James* 2. 25. *Ye ſee then, how by Works a man is juſtified, and not by Faith only.* Now a man that hath ſatisfying light, he reconciles theſe two thus; St. *Paul* he ſpeaks of Juſtification before God, and St. *James* he ſpeaks of Juſtification before men; We are juſtified before God by Faith only, we are juſtified before men by works. Again, they may be reconciled thus, Faith doth juſtifie our Perſons, but good works doth juſtifie our Faith; Good works are no part of our Juſtification, but only a proof of our Juſtification.

Laſtly, In the Deſcription I ſay this, A Beliver having received a ſatisfying light, gives up his underſtanding reſolvedly to thoſe Truths that are revealed to him. But you will ſay, *When doth a man give up his underſtanding reſolvedly to thoſe*

Truths

Truths revealed to him? I will tell you

First, When he is resolved to part with every sin that the Word of God disallows and condemns, though it be as dear to him as his right hand, or his right eye, and when he can practice every duty that the Word of God commands, though it be never so difficult. As for example, the duty of Mortification, and Self-denyal, and contempt of the World, when he can purifie his heart by believing, and obeying the Truth, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. *Seeing you have purified your Souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.* And it is said of many of the Priests, that *they were obedient to the Faith*, Acts 6. 7. And St. *Paul* said, *Acts* 26. 19. that *he was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision.*

Secondly, A man gives up his understanding resolvedly to the truth, when he can plead for the truth, and not plead against it. Saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. *For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.* Doctor *Taylor* the Martyr in Queen *Maryes* dayes, he laid down his life for this truth, *that it was lawful for Ministers to marry; I know* (said he) *that it is not a fundamental truth, but because I know it is the truth of God, rather than I will part with any truth, I will part with my life.* So then, when a man can thus resolvedly give up his understanding to the truth, that he will part with his life rather than part with the truth, then hath he attained to this certainty of knowledge indeed. And thus you see the Description of it, and have the Poynt opened, now let me make Application of it.

Use 1. If this be a certain truth, *That they that*

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do the Will of God, shall not only know more of Gods Will, but they shall know it more assuredly, they shall be sure of what they know, and shall attain to this certainty of knowledge that I have been speaking of, then it serves to let us see what is the reason of all the errors that are broached, and so greedily drunk in, in these dayes in which we live; what is the reason of that uncertainty, and unconstancy that is in Religion; that men are giddy headed, turned with every wind of Doctrine, and new Opinion, and suck in such strange and corrupt Doctrines; and that there is so many Sects and Schismes; the reason is, because men never attained to this full assurance of understanding, this certainty of knowledge that the Text speaks of, *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* All the knowledge that they have of the Scripture, it may be it is but an Opinion, or a conjecture, or a guesse, a notional knowledge, a knowledge that is taken up upon tradition, or trust, not that they have any assurance of it in their own hearts and understandings; All the knowledge of *Scepticks*, those that you call *Seekers*, *Nullifidians*, that believe nothing, all whose profession is to professe nothing, all their knowledge is but a meer Opinion, the truth is, they have no knowledge at all; *If they did know the truth, the truth would make them free*; If they had known the truth, they would have been rooted, and setled, and established in it, they would part with their lives, rather than part with the truth.

A second Lesson you may learn hence, is this, It lets us see what the reason is of all that Atheism

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and looſneſs, and libertiniſm, that is in the hearts of men, and practiſes of men at this day; the reaſon is, becauſe they never attained to any certainty of knowledg in the Doctrine of Chriſt, and Myſteries of Religion, they never did believe the Precepts, nor Promiſes, nor Threatnings of God cordially; for example, Did men but believe the threatnings of the Word; to name two or three; When God ſaith, *Upon the wicked he will rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt, this ſhall be the portion of their Cup*, Pſal. 11. 6. Again, when God ſaith, that *he will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of ſuch a one as goeth on ſtill in his treſpaſſes*, Pſal. 68. 21. And God ſaith expreſsly, that *no unrighteous perſon ſhall inherit the Kingdome of God, neither Fornicaters, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with Man-kind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. And that Text ſaith expreſſely, *That the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and ſorcerers, and Idolaters, and all lyars, ſhall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone*, Rev. 21. 8. Did men but know theſe truths, were they but aſſured of them, durſt they do as they do? durſt they venture their immortal ſouls, that muſt ſink or ſwim for ever, that are capable of endleſs Bliſſe, or endleſſe, remedileſſe miſery in Hell, more dayes than there are drops of water in the whole Ocean? durſt they venture their precious ſouls for the ſatisfying of every baſe luſt, as they do? no, they durſt not. Men do not know theſe truths, and becauſe they do not know them, therefore it

is that they do not believe them, and becauſe they do not know and believe them, therefore *there is in them an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God.* The firſt ſtep of the ſouls departure from God is by unbelief, ſo the firſt ſtep of the ſouls approach to God, is by Faith; unbelief is the cauſe of all other ſins. A man that doth not believe the Promiſes of God to embrace them, nor the Threatnings of God to fear them, nor the Precepts of God to obey them, when he departs from God by unbelief, he departs to other ſins, and ſtill departs further and further; ſo that the breach between God and the Soul, is never made up again, but ſuch a man departs from God ſtep by ſtep, until at laſt he comes to hear that thunder-ſtriking ſentence, *Depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

A ſecond Uſe is by way of Examination; and I beſeech you my Brethren, to call your ſelves to an account, and examine whether you have this certainty of underſtanding, this aſſured knowledg that I have diſcourſed of. May be you will ſay to me, *But how ſhall we know whether we have it or no? Anſ.* I will tell you how you may know it, theſe three wayes.

Firſt, by the names or expreſſions that the Spirit of God gives it.

Secondly, By the Properties of it.

Thirdly, By the Effects of it.

Firſt, You may know it by the names or expreſſions that the Spirit of God gives it; ſuch expreſſions as theſe now.

Firſt, It is called a knowledg of thoſe things which are moſt ſurely believed, *Luke* 1. 1. Not barely believed, but certainly believed. A

A second expression is, 2 being taught of God, *John* 6. 45. *And they shall be all taught of God.*

Thirdly, It is known by this expression, by *writing the Law of God in our hearts, upon the Tables of our hearts*, Jer. 31. 33. Heb. 8. 10.

Fourthly, By this expression, by receiving *the anointing that teacheth you all things*, 1 John 2. 27. *But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth.*

Fifthly, It is known by this expression, by *having the mind of Christ*, or *knowing the mind of Christ*, 1 Cor. 2. *ult.*

Sixthly, It is known by this expression, by *bringing high thoughts into the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. When there is such a light in a man, that it can answer those Objections that are made against the truth, when it can likewise so stifle those reasonings and cavils of his back-sliding heart, that none of them shall be able to beat down the truth, but he shall be able to stick to the truth notwithstanding; such a man hath this certainty of knowledg.

Lastly, It is known by this expression, *the manifestation of the Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 2. *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall.*

Secondly, This certainty of knowledg, may be known by the Properties of it, I shall name but these four Properties.

First, This assuring knowle dg is ever a heart-humbling knowledge. Carnal knowledge, natural knowledg, unsanctified knowledg, puffs a man

up, it makes him like a pair of Bellows, as the word φυσιοῖ in the Original ſignifies, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. but this aſſuring knowledg, it ever makes a man baſe and humble in his own eyes; the more you know of God, and of the truths of God, and of your own ſelves, the more vile and baſe you will be in your own eyes: *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye ſeeth thee, wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes*, Job 42. 5, 6.

Secondly, This knowledg is a reflexive knowledg, it makes a man turn in upon his own heart, it makes a man to be wiſe for himſelf, *Prov.* 9. 12. *If thou be wiſe, thou ſhalt be wiſe for thy ſelf.* There is many a man that knoweth how to teach others, but yet he cannot teach himſelf, *Job* 5. 27. *Lo this, we have ſearched it, ſo it is, hear it, and know thou it for thy good.* In the Hebrew it is יאתה ידעלך שמעה, *Hear and know it for thy ſelf.*

Thirdly, This aſſured knowledg is an experimental knowledg, for it will make a man read ſome Sculpture or ingraving of the Spirit of God upon his own heart, that *his heart will be Chriſts Epiſtle, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God*, 2 Cor. 3. 3. The truth is, my Brethren, (and I would have you to remember it) that all the truths of God, to a carnal and unregenerate man, are Myſteries. No man (for example) knows what Repentance is, but the repenting ſinner; no man knows what Faith is, but the true Believer; no man knows what Regeneration is, but he that is regenerate; no man knows what Union with Chriſt is, but he that is united to Chriſt; no man knows what it is to have Communion with Chriſt in his Life, and Death, and Reſurrection, and Graces,

ces, and Comforts, but he that hath felt them in his own heart; no man knows it savingly, until he knows it experimentally. A sick man doth better know what his disease is, than all the Physitians in the world, because he feels it. A blind man may talk of colours, that never saw them. A hungry man may talk of a rich Banquet, that he never tasted of: But now this sure knowledg, it is an experimental knowledg.

Fourthly, It is a heart-warming knowledg; other knowledg, a notional knowledg, is but like the light of the Moon, it enlightens indeed, in a dark night, but it doth not warm. But now this assured knowledg is like the light of the Sun, it doth not only enlighten you, but it heats and warms your hearts, it will make you in love with Jesus Christ, and to long for more Communion with him, in Grace here, and in Glory hereafter.

Thirdly, You may know this certainty of knowledg by the Effects of it; and I shall name but these two.

First, This assured knowledg will make you to hold fast the Name of God, notwithstanding all the opposition that you meet with, it will make you stick to the Truths of God, *Psal.* 119. 31. *I have stuck unto thy Testimonies, O Lord, put me not to shame.* In *Rev.* 2. 13. God speaks to the Church of *Pergamos, Thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denyed my Faith, even in those dayes where Antipas was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth*; Thou hast kept my Name there, in the midst of opposition.

Secondly, It will make a man run any hazard rather than part with the Truth. See the courage of St.

St. *Paul*, Acts 20. 24. *The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, Bonds and afflictions abide me; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self, so I may finish my course with joy.* The truth is, a little light, if it be spiritual, will make a man to resist temptations, that the allurements of the Flesh, and the World, and the Devil, shall not Bias him, and carry him away. On the contrary, a great light, if it be not spiritual, will yield to every temptation; and hence it is, that sometimes you see a man of weak parts stand out in an hour of temptation and tryal, when a man of strong and great parts (if he wants this spiritual light) to fall fowly and fearfully. A man that hath once got this assured knowledg of the truth, he will say, *I will lay down my life, rather than I will part with the truth*: Another man that hath not received this light, how will he shift, and shuffle, and temporize, and part with the truth, and swim with every stream, and sail with every wind! how will he be a double-minded man in all his ways, and will be carried about with every wind of Doctrine!

Use 3. Now to shut up all with this one word of Exhortation: I beseech you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you would labour for this full assurance of understanding, that you would be rooted, and setled, and established in the truth, get a setled understanding. Now to press you to this, let me use but these two Motives.

The first is this; The truth is, there is no proper knowledg where this certainty is wanting, it is at the best else, but matter of conjecture. See an instance in Sr. *Paul*, before he had this spiritual light, in *Acts* 26. 9. *I verily thought with my self, that*

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I ought to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth. It was but his thought and conjecture; whereas when a man hath once gotten this certainty of knowledg, then he understands the Scriptures indeed, *Luke* 24. 45. *Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.* And you may observe in the Parable of the Sower, and the four grounds, three whereof were naught, and one good; of the three first it is not said, that they received the Word with understanding, but only the fourth ground heard the Word, and received it with understanding, *Math.* 13. 23.

A second Motive is this, it will be of singular use to you, in erronious and back-sliding times, it will be of singular advantage to your poor souls, when you shall have that knowledg, that you can discern Truth from Error, and Gold from Copper, and Food from Poyson. Our Saviour here in the Text speaks of it as the Priviledge of a Believer, or obedient Christian, that he shall be able to discern true Doctrine from false. Certainly, in such times as we live in, wherein the Name of God is so much blasphemed, and the Truth is eclipsed, and the Sun of the Gospel is so much darkned by those fogs and mists of error, it is a singular Priviledge for a man to have a setled knowledg in the Truth, that he may not be carried about with every wind of Doctrine. But it may be you will say, *What course must we take to get this certainty of knowledg?* I shall tell you that in three words.

First, If ever you desire to have this full assurance of knowledg, you must resolve to walk humbly with your God, *Psal* 25. 9. *The meek will he guide in Judgement, and the humble will he teach his way.*

Secondly,

Secondly, Strive to be growing Christians. That is an excellent Scripture, *Hosea 6. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.*

Thirdly, If you would get this full assurance of understanding, I cannot give you a better direction than the Text gives you, which our Saviour here prescribes you; do but the will of God, that is practice what you know, and you shall know more, and you shall know in a better manner, and know more assuredly than you do. I conclude with an excellent speech of a Reverend Divine, that is now with God, *Men, in matters of Religion, do therefore become Scepticks, because they are not Practicks*; that is, men are ever doubting of Truth, they will be *Seekers, Nullifidians*, they will believe nothing, because they do not practice what they know. It is the practical Christian that shall know much of God, that shall have the mind of God made known to him, shall have more of the in-comes of the Spirit of God; whereas, if you will not be practical Christians, you shall be always floating, and wavering, and double minded, and ready to be seduced, and lead into by-paths of error, which will endanger the Salvation of your immortal Souls. *The Lord help us to practice those Truths that we know, that he may delight in us, and do us good, and lead our feet in the way of life.*

FINIS.